गहरे पानी पैठ और ज्योतिष पर दो प्रवचन

Hidden Mysteries

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Chapter #1

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Suppose we have a key in our hands. We cannot directly understand the purpose of it from the key itself, nor is it possible to imagine from the key itself that a great treasure is likely to be revealed with its help. There is no hidden indication in the key regarding the treasure; the key itself is closed. Even if we break it or cut it into pieces, we may find the metal of which it is made, but we cannot learn anything about the hidden treasure which the key is capable of revealing. And whenever such a key is preserved for a long time, it only becomes a burden in our life.

In life there are many such keys which can open the doors of treasures even today, but unfortunately we neither know anything about those treasures nor about those locks which can be opened. When we do not know either about the treasures or the locks, then what is left in our hands cannot even be called a key. It can only be a key if it opens a lock. This same key may have revealed treasures some time in the past, but because today nothing can be unlocked, the key has become a burden. But even so, somehow we do not feel like throwing it away.

The key has left a sort of lingering fragrance in the unconscious mind of man. Maybe some four thousand years ago that key did open some locks, and treasures were found: the remembrance of that in the unconscious mind makes us carry the burden of that key to this day. However much one may be persuaded about the uselessness of the key, we cannot gather the courage to throw it away. In some unknown corner of the heart there still lingers the hope that some day some lock might be opened by it.

Take, for example, temples.... There is no sect on earth which has not built something like a temple -- it doesn't matter whether it is called a masjid or a church or a gurudwara. Today it is possible for us to learn something from other sects, but there was a time when we did not even know about the existence of other sects, so there was no way to learn from others. The temple is not the fanciful result of the imagination of some eccentric people, but its roots lie somewhere deep in the inner consciousness of man.

Man may have lived far away in a forest, or on a mountain, or in a cave, or on the bank of a river -- he may have lived anywhere for that matter -- but wherever he has lived man has builtsomething resembling a temple. Something has come out of his consciousness. There is no blind imitation in it; they were not constructed by looking at

other temples. So all temples have been of different shapes and types, but they have always existed.

There is a lot of difference between a temple and a masjid, their arrangement and planning are quite different from each other, but there is no difference in man's aspiration or inner urge. Man may be anywhere; however unfamiliar and unacquainted he is with others, he carries the same latent seed somewhere in his consciousness.

Another thing worth noting is that though thousands of years have passed and we have no clue about the locks or the hidden treasures, still we continue to carry strange keys as though under the spell of some lingering memory. Despite all the attackson this -- reason tries to shatter it from all sides; the so-called modern intellectual doesn't accept it -- still the human heart treasures this memory and continues to be fascinated by it. So we ought to remember that though today man is not aware of it, yet somewhere in his unconscious there is a resounding echo which tells us that some locks once used to open.

Why is this stored in the unconscious? It is because none of us is new to this world. All of us are born again and again, and there was never a time when we did not exist. What we knew consciously in days past is now, today, unconscious, buried within us under thousands of layers as the unconscious. If in days past we knew the significance and deeper secrets of a temple and experienced the opening of some inner door, then somewhere in the deep recesses of the unconscious that memory still lies embedded. The intellect may totally deny its existence, but intellect cannot reach that depth where the memory is retained.

So despite all obstacles, despite its appearing meaningless in every way, this is something which persists, which can't be removed. It may take new forms, but it continues. This is only possible if we have known something an infinite number of times in our infinitely long journey of births and deaths -- though we may not remember it today.

Apart from having an outward use -- as a means to an end -- each of these things also have a deeper significance and purpose.

The universal appeal for making a temple is inherent only in man. Animals make their dwellings, and birds build nests, but they do not build temples. When distinguishing man from animals, one prominent feature is that man is a temple-making animal; no other animal makes temples. To provide some shelter for oneself is absolutely natural because it is done by every creature. Birds and animals do it, even small insects do it, but to build a house the divine is a distinctive feature of man.

Without man's having some deep awareness of the divine, a temple could not be built. Even if that awareness is later lost, the temple will still remain; and it is quite certain that it could not have been built without a deep experience of the divine.

You make a guest house because guests go on visiting you. If there were no guests, you wouldn't waste money on a guest house. But even though there may be no guests now, the guest house remains. So the whole idea of building temples or shrines for the divine must have been conceived of in such moments when the divine was not just a matter of imagination but a living reality for people. The very process of the incarnation of the divine on earth made it necessary to have special places in every nook and corner of the world which could serve as special abodes for him. To properly receive anything, adequate arrangements have to be made.

It can be understood this way.... Radio waves are passing by all around us, but they cannot be picked up without a radio receiver. Tomorrow, if there was a third world war and if all technology was destroyed but somehow a radio receiver was luckily left intact, you wouldn't want to throw it away. Though you know that you can't broadcast, or tune in to any program, or even find a technician to repair it, you wouldn't want to throw the radio away.

After several generations in your family, if anyone were to ask the use of the radio, none of your family members alive then would be able to reply. They might only say that their fathers and their forefathers were insistent on its being preserved, so they continue to keep it. Their forefathers never told them what it was for, they don't know its use and so it is of no help to them; even if that radio is dismantled nothing could be known. By opening the radio it couldn't be known that some time in the past music and talks could be heard through it. The radio only used to act as a receiving station for some happening elsewhere, but it could pick up the waves and act as a medium to present them as sounds to listeners.

Exactly in the same manner, temples used to function as receptive instruments.

Though godliness is everywhere and human beings are also present everywhere, only in some specific circumstances within us do we become attuned to that godliness. So temples served as centers of receptivity to enable us to feel the divine existence, godliness, spiritual elevation. The whole arrangement in temples was motivated with this end in view. Different types of people thought up various arrangements, but that is not of much consequence. It makes no difference if various manufacturers produce radios incorporating their own specialities, with different shapes and forms, as long as the ultimate purpose is the same.

The temples in India were mostly constructed from one ofthree or four patterns; other temples were just copies of these. The domes of the temples were based on the model of the sky. There was an underlying purpose to this. If I sit under the open sky and repeat "Aum," my voice will get lost, because the strength of an individual voice will be enveloped by the vastness of the sky. I will not be able to hear the reverberation, the echo of my chanting -- all my prayers will get lost in the vastness of the sky.

Domes were constructed so that the resonance of our prayers can rebound on us. The dome is just a small, semi-circular prototype of the sky. It has the same shape as the sky touching the earth on all four sides. Whatever prayers or chantings are made under its canopy will not get lost as they would in the vast sky, because the dome will throw them back towards the supplicant. The rounder the dome, the easier it is for the sound to travel back, and its echo increases in the same proportion.

As time passed even stones were discovered which could multiply the resonance to a tremendous degree.

There is a Buddhist prayer hall in the Ajanta caves where the stones echo sound with the same intensity as that of the Indian musical instrument, the tabla. If we strike those stones with the same force as is used in playing the tabla, they will give out the same volume of sound. Ordinary stones used in the construction of domes do not possess the capacity to echo certain very subtle sounds, and so that specific type of stone was employed.

What is the purpose behind all this? The purpose is that when anyone chants "Aum," and it is done very intensely, the dome of the temple makes the sound reverberate,

forming a circle of the chanting or sound. The dome of the temple, by the very nature of its design, helps in the formation of a circle by echoing the sound. Such a sound circle is unique. If "Aum" is chanted under the wide open sky, no sound circle will be formed, and you will never experience that joy.

When the formation of the circle happens, you don't remain just a humble supplicant before the divine, but you become a recipient -- that is to say, the one whose prayers are answered. And with that resonance, the divine experience begins to enter you. Although the sound produced in the chanting is human, when it is echoed it resounds with a new speed, and as it is imbibed, other potentialities are released.

The dome-shaped temples were used to form sound circles through the chanting of mantras. If one does the chanting sitting all alone in perfect peace and silence, then as soon as the sound circle is formed, thoughts will stop. On one side the circle is formed, and on the other, thoughts come to a stop. As I have often said, a circle of energy is formed even in the act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman, and when the formation of such a circle takes place -- that is the moment pointing toward superconsciousness.

Look at the statues of Buddha and Mahavira in padmasan or siddhasan. These indicate other methods for the formation of such circles. When we sit putting both our feet together and our hands on our legs, then the whole body begins to act as a circle. Then the body electricity cannot escape, and a circuit is created. As soon as the circuit is created, one becomes thoughtless. If we use the language of an electrical engineer, it could be said that the crowd of noisy thoughts within the mind is because of our not creating a circuit of inner electricity. As soon as the circuit is created the inner energy becomes balanced and silent. So, creating a circle of energy with the help of the temple's dome was a great process, and this was its purpose and deep significance.

We find big bells or gongs at the entrance of temples, and these serve the same purpose. When you chant "Aum," although you may be doing so very quietly and your attention may be elsewhere, the sound of the bell will instantly bring your attention back to the circle of sound created by the vibrating bell. It is just like when a stone is thrown into a pond, creating ripple upon ripple.

In Tibetan temples instead of a bell or gong they keep a bowl-shaped vessel made from various metals, and a wooden stick to revolve inside it. The stick is rotated within the vessel seven times, and then it is struck once on the bowl with a loud bang. The vibrations created in the bowl produce a sound like, "Mani padme hum" -- the whole mantra. The bowl echoes the sound, "Mani padme hum," not once, but seven times. Turn the stick inside the bowl rapidly, seven times, strike the bowl and then take the stick out -- and then you will hear the echo of the mantra, "Mani padme hum," seven times. Though the sound will gradually become softer and softer, it will be heard seven times.

Similarly, in a domed temple create within yourself of the mantra, "Aum mani padme hum," and listen: the temple will echo it. Every cell of your body will receive the vibration and return it with a deeper resonance. After a few moments neither you nor the temple will be there -- only circles of energy will be left.

It should be remembered that sound is a subtle form of electricity. Now even science agrees with this. In fact, everything is a form of electricity. But the Indian sages go one step further and say that electricity is a form of sound, that sound is the base, not

electricity. That is why they call the supreme being shabda-brahma -- "sound is the ultimate reality."

There is now a great similarity of approach between Eastern thinkers and modern scientists, the only difference being over which of the two is primary. The scientist says that electricity is primary, whereas the sage says that density of sound produces electricity. This means that in the near future science will have to research the absolute aspect of sound.

The sage's understanding stems from the experience of the sounds produced under the dome of a temple. When the intense sound of "Aum" is created in a temple by a devotee, within a few minutes he feels that neither he nor the temple is there, but only electricity remains. This conclusion is not reached in any laboratory -- those who made such declarations had no laboratories, their temple served as their only laboratory. There they experienced that although they started with sound, what remained in the end was electricity.

To experience this transformation of sound, dome-shaped temples were made.

When Westerners saw Indian temples for the first time, they thought they were very unhygienic. By the very nature of their conception the temples could not have many doors and windows. There could only be one door, and that too was very small. The idea behind this was to ensure that the circle of sound being created in the temple didn't become obstructed. It is no wonder then that those Westerners went away with the impression that the temples were dingy, dark and dirty, and that even fresh air could not enter them. By comparison, their own churches were airy and clean and had many big doors and windows through which light and fresh air could easily enter and keep them hygienic.

I have told you earlier that when the secret of using a key is forgotten, all sorts of difficulties crop up. Today not one person in India will be able to say why temples were not provided with windows and many doors. So when asked we also felt inclined to agree that our temples are unhygienic; no one could argue that in these temples lived the most healthy people and that no disease had been allowed to enter. The people who used to pray and worship there happened to be some of the healthiest people, in the true sense of the term.

Why? Slowly it began to be realized that the sound produced by the chanting of "Aum" has a unique purifying effect. There are certain sounds which have a purifying effect, and there are others which contaminate. Some particular sounds act as deterrents for diseases, and there are others which invite disease. The whole science of sound, however, is lost.

Those who have said that sound is the absolute being have said the ultimate that can be said about sound. There is no experience greater than the absolute being, and they had not known anything deeper than sound which they could use to express themselves.

All the melodies and modes and their modifications are born in the East. These are the extensions of the experiences of theabsolute being in the form of sound. Musical compositions, as well as all dance forms, originated in temples and later on developed elsewhere as specific arts. It was only in the temple that a devotee experienced the effects of sound in its innumerable variations -- so many that it is difficult to keep any count.

Just forty years ago there lived a recluse in Varanasi called Vishuddhananda. He gave hundreds of demonstrations to prove that through some special sound it is possible to kill somebody. This sadhu used to sit under a dome in a temple, a temple which could be said to be utterly unhygienic according to modern terminology. For the first time, in the presence of three doctors from England, an experiment was carried out. The doctors took a sparrow into the temple with them. Vishuddhananda made certain sounds: the sparrow fluttered about for a while and then fell dead. The doctors examined it and pronounced it dead. Then Vishuddhananda made some other sounds: he sparrow came back to life and began fluttering about again. Then it was realized for the first time that the impact of sound can produce specific effects.

Now we readily accept that certain effects are produced by certain sounds because science can prove it. We now say that if a particular light ray falls on your body, it will bring particular results; if a specific medicine is administered to a patient, it will produce specific results; if special colors are used, they bring about special effects. Why then shouldn't special sounds cause certain effects?

Now there are some laboratories in the West which are actively engaged in investigating the relationship between sound and life, and two or three laboratories have arrived at conclusions of deep significance.

In two laboratories scientists succeeded in proving that special sounds can produce more milk in lactating mothers. Through certain sounds plants can be made to blossom within two months instead of the usual six months. And cows yield double the quantity of milk if soft music is played at the time of milking. All the dairies in Russia today employ this latest method at the time of milking. And the day is not far off when all fruits and vegetables will be grown with the help of special sounds. Demonstrations have already been made in laboratories, and it is only a matter of time until it is done on a broader scale. If fruit, vegetables and milk are influenced by sound, should not be influenced by sound.

Disease and health are dependent on special sound waves, so in the past people made hygienic arrangements in their temples which were not in any way dependant on air. They did not believe that only an abundant air supply lead to good health. Otherwise, it is inconceivable that over a period of five thousand years they could not hit upon the idea of proper ventilation in their places of worship.

The Indian recluse usually sits in caves where no light or air enters, or he sits in temples with small doors where one has to bend low to enter. There are some temples where you have to lie down and crawl in to enter; and there are even some temples one can enter only by chanting. In spite of this, there were no ill effects on the health of devotees. That is our experience over thousands of years. But when, under the influence of Westerners, we can began to doubt that for the first time, our temple doors were made bigger and windows were installed. We modernized the temples; but in doing so we converted them into ordinary houses.

The acoustics and the architecture of a temple have a deep connection.

There is a specific stipulation as to the angle at which a sound is to be made. There are stipulations for making a sound while standing and while sitting. It is even stipulated which sounds can be made only while lying down, because the impact of the sound will have a certain affect when made standing, and will change again when made while you are sitting down. It is also clarified which sounds should be made together and which are

to be made separately. So it is interesting to note the confusion that was created when vedic literature was translated into Western languages.

Western languages emphasize the linguistic rather than the phonetic, whereas the vedic view gives more importance not so much to the meaning of the written or spoken word as to the special sound it should produce, and the composition of that sound. Hence the Sanskrit language is phonetic, not linguistic; the emphasis is more on the sound than on the word. And so, for thousands of years it was felt that these valuable scriptures should not be written down, because it was natural that no sooner would it be written down than the emphasis on sound would be lost. The insistence was that the knowledge be passed on by word of mouth, rather than in writing, because in writing words down -- they would be mere words, and the subtle sensations associated with the sound would be lost and so become meaningless.

If we write down the word Rama, those who are reading it will say the word in many different ways. Someone will put more emphasis on "r" and someone else, more emphasis on "a," and still somebody else will put more emphasis on "m." It will depend on the individual reader. So as soon as a word is written down, the effect of sound is destroyed. Now, to understand the effect of the sound of those words, a whole decoding exercise to pronounce the words correctly will have to be done. So for thousands of years there was a strong insistence on not writing down any scripture, because the ancient seers did not want the phonetic arrangement lost. The scripture had to be passed on to others directly by word of mouth, so scriptures were known as shrutis, meaning that which is learnt by listening.

What was passed down in the form of written books was never accepted as scripture. It was all scientifically based on the arrangement of sound. At some places the sound had to be soft, and at others it had to be loud. It was very difficult to write these words in script form. The day the scriptures were reduced to writing, the essential, inherent, original, inner arrangement of sound was lost. It was no longer necessary to understand only through listening. You can read a scripture -- it is available in the market. Now there is no relationship or relevance to sound.

It is important to note that the emphasis of the scriptures was never on the meaning. The emphasis on meaning became relevant later, when we reduced those scriptures to writing. If some thing written down has no meaning it will look insane, so meaning has necessarily to be given to the written word. There are still some parts of vedic lore where no meaning could be deciphered -- and these are the real parts, because they are totally phonetic. They do not convey any meaning.

For example, the question about the meaning of the Tibetan mantra, "Aum mani padme hum," does not arise because its significance is totally phonetic. Similarly, there is no question of any meaning in the mantra,"Aum," but it has a sound-based impact which creates a special effect. When a meditator repeats, "Aum mani padme hum," again and again, the sound affects the various chakras and they are activated. The question is not of the meaning, the significance concerns the sounds themselves. So the fact that the old scriptures did not lay any stress on the meaning, but on their utility -- the purpose for which they could be used and the benefits which could be derived from them -- deserves our special attention.

Buddha was once asked, "What is truth?" He replied, "Truth is that which can be used." The definition of truth is that which can be used. Science will define truth in the

same way. Its definition will be pragmatic: Truth is that which can be made use of in life and which can be demonstrated.

If it is said that when hydrogen and oxygen are mixed, water is created, we don't care whether that statement is true or not; if we can see that water is made from mixing hydrogen and oxygen, it is true, otherwise not. The statement in itself has no validity, its validity is its utility. If it is possible to create water that way, it has to be proved by actual demonstration. Now science has adopted this definition of truth which religion accepted five thousand years ago. In religion utility was the test to verify a truth.

The mantra "Aum," has no meaning but it has utility; a temple has no meaning but it has utility. To make use of it is an art, and there is an inherent flow in all the arts which cannot be taught, but must be absorbed.

I have read that there was an emperor in China fifteen hundred years ago, who was very fond of meat -- so much so that he would have a cow or bull slaughtered right before his eyes. The same butcher slaughtered cattle in front of him regularly every morning for fifteen years. One day the emperor asked, "I haven't seen you sharpening your axe once in fifteen years. Doesn't its edge become blunt?"

The butcher replied, "No, Your Majesty, it doesn't. The edge becomes blunt only when the butcher is not an expert, if he does not know where to strike. The butcher must know where there are bones and joints, and then the axe can cut the animal in two with one blow. This art of cutting is passed on from one generation to the next. So not only does the edge not become blunt, it becomes sharper daily, with every fresh stroke."

The emperor asked the butcher to teach him the art.

The butcher replied, "It would be very difficult to. I have not learnt this art but imbibed it from watching my father since my early childhood. It wasn't taught to me, I absorbed the art through watching my father every day. Sometimes I would fetch the axe for him, and sometimes I would stack up the limbs of the animals. That was how I learnt the art. If you are ready to do the same -- standing beside me, sometimes handing over the axe to me and then putting it back, sometimes simply sitting and watching -- then perhaps you will learn the art. But I cannot teach it to you."

Science can be taught, but art has to be imbibed.

All these mantras have no meaning, but they have pragmatic value and we have made our children absorb them at a very early age. They used to learn the use of the temple without ever even being aware of what they had learnt. They would learn the art of entering a temple, how to sit there and how to make use of the sacred precincts. Whenever there was an emergency or any difficulties, they would run to the temple and then return home, having regained a balance and tranquility. Each morning they would go to the temple, because what they got there was not possible to find anywhere else. But all of this was not taught to them, they incorporated it at a very early stage in childhood. It was not taught to them but imbibed by them. Wherever there is art, it cannot be taught.

The effects of sound in the temple, and the temple itself, was an arrangement for experimentation. As long as the effect of the sound of a word was not understood, the whole experiment was meaningless.

For example, it was a convention that a mantra should only be given to a disciple by a master. The emphasis was on the mantra being recited by the master in the disciple's

ear. You might have known the mantra for a long time, but still the master would whisper it in your ear.

You might wonder, "What is new in this? Couldn't I have done it without the master? Everybody knows how to repeat a mantra, and still this master has whispered it to me as if it is a great secret!" But what is to be understood is that when the master says it in the disciple's ear, he does it in a particular way, so as to emphasize certain sounds -- something which is not known to all. As a matter of fact there are various phonetic variations of "Ram" that have different effects.

We know the story of the sage Valmiki, but this tale has now lost its true significance and so seems rather childish. It is said that Valmiki was illiterate and a mere rustic. His master told him to repeat the mantra, "Rama, rama," but after some time he forgot and started chanting it in reverse, "Mara, mara" -- and became enlightened!

When the real keys to unravel such mysteries become lost, all sorts of troubles arise. The fact is that while chanting the mantra, "Rama, rama," after a period of time you automatically begin to chant, "Mara, mara," so creating a circuit. When "Rama, rama" is chanted quickly the chanting turns into "Mara, mara"; then it has the right phonetic emphasis. Then something unique happens: you cease to be, you are no more, and in that very moment when you cease to be or you die to your identity, the mantra becomes complete. That is the moment of real experience -- when you have ceased, your ego has died.

It is interesting to note that if this process is completed properly -- you will begin with the repetition of "Rama, rama," and very soon the moment will arise when you will be repeating, "Mara, mara" instead, and even if you want to say, "Rama," you will not be able to; your whole being will repeat, "Mara, mara".... At that moment you will die to yourself -- and that is the first step of meditation. When your dying to yourself is total, you will suddenly find that "Mara, mara" is beginning to revert to, "Rama, rama." When that "Rama, rama" begins from within you, without you doing it you will actually experience rama -- but not before that. In between, the transformation to "Mara" is essential.

So there are three parts to the mantra. Begin with "Rama," lose your identity in "Mara," and then the mantra will evolve into "Rama." The second step of "Mara" is the necessary part of the process; unless that happens in the middle, the real, ultimate rama experience in the third step won't happen. If you know the true phonetics and if you chant it properly -- if you lay stress on "ra" and less on "m," only then will "Rama" change into "Mara." When "m" has less emphasis, it becomes like a valley, and "r" becomes the crest, the highest peak. In your repeating the "m" of "rama" with less emphasis the transformation happens and very soon you will find that "m" becomes the peak and "r" becomes the valley. Then you are repeating, "Mara, mara" without your knowing it.

Like waves in the ocean, after every crest there is a valley. Like waves in the ocean, sound also has waves like a crescendo and diminuendo in music. Unless you are aware of the proper phonetic pronunciation, you can go on repeating a mantra but it will produce no results.

Whoever wrote this story about Valmiki repeating "Mara, mara" because he was illiterate and an ignorant rustic, is far from the truth. Valmiki was illiterate and a rustic, but in this particular instance he was quite clever. He knew the whole science of how to chant "Rama" to transform the sound into "Mara." Only after that intervening

transformation will Rama be born. That "Rama" will not be the one spoken by you, because during that second step of "Mara" you cease to be. Who will repeat it? The real "Rama" that is born within you at the end of the second step will not be spoken by you but will be just a happening, in spite of you. It will happen automatically, it will not be your repetition.

The value of the shrutis -- meaning the scriptures that are heard or listened to -- is the phonetic emphasis. Only a person who knows the science of phonetics can pass on the knowledge of shruti; then only will it be useful. Otherwise the words will be the same as written in the book -- anybody can read them -- but the science will remain unknown. That science of sound -- its ascents and descents and the lengths of soundless intervals -- constitutes the whole mystery. tes the whole mystery.

There used to be a complete scripture of mantras, and temples served as laboratories where they were tested. This was of great value for the seeker. The number of people experiencing god-realization within the precincts of temples has always been more than of those who have experienced it outside the temple. This has happened in spite of the fact that godliness is present outside the temples as much as inside.

People like Mahavira, who had to experiment outside temples, had to find different methods, more painstaking than the ones used in temples. Mahavira had to spend years mastering many different types of postures so that he could create the circuit of energy within. He didn't want to use the help of the temple, but the alternative was a lengthy process of difficult practices which took years and which could only be accomplished by a man with the iron will of Mahavira.

Buddha also attained enlightenment without the help of a temple. But soon after the deaths of both Mahavira and Buddha temples had to be constructed because what a temple could offer to the ordinary man was not necessarily what was given by either Buddha or Mahavira. What Buddha and Mahavira advocated was not always possible for the common man to achieve.

Today, if we can fully understand the science of sound circuits we can invent better instruments than a temple. Now some research is already going on in this direction. It is possible to invent better instruments because now we know a lot about electricity. But such experiments can be dangerous too. Still, if properly scientific arrangements are set up, whatever help a temple used to give will be got from scientific technology, because the circle of energy that was created in a temple will now be created by some other method. Now, you can keep a small instrument in your pocket, which can activate an electric circuit within you. On that electronic instrument, you may even be able to store recorded sounds which may create circuits within you. Some research is presently in progress in this area in America.

Seven or eight scientists in America are now engaged in a fascinating study aimed at showing that all our experiences of pleasure and pain are nothing but electrical currents passing through some centers of the body.

For example, if your body is pricked all over with a needle, at some of those points you will not experience pain. There are a few dead spots in your body where you won't feel anything. If someone pricks your back at a dozen spots or so, three or four of those places will have no sensation. Exactly in the same way, there will be five or ten spots of great sensitivity where even the slightest pricking will cause a lot of pain.

Our head has many sensitive spots. There are millions of cells in the brain, and each one has a particular sensitivity. When you say you feel happy, electricity is flowing through one particular cell giving you a sense of happiness. Suppose you are sitting next to your beloved, holding her hand, and you say you are feeling happy. What is happening? If a scientist described this phenomenon, he would say that electricity is flowing through a particular center in your brain, and that it is only your past mental association with this person which makes you so happy in her presence. But you may not feel that happiness after two or three months, because if you use a certain center very often, letting the electricity flow through it frequently, that cell becomes insensitive.

For example, if you repeatedly prick your foot at a particular spot with a thorn, the pain will become less and less. Tomorrow the pain will be less than today, and the day after that it will be even less. If you go on doing it, that spot will develop a knot which will become insensitive and will not feel any pain at all. People who play the sitar develop insensitive surface skin on their fingers. Then any amount of plucking on the instrument's strings does not make any difference; their fingers don't feel any pain.

So if you feel that your love has died after three or four months, or become less, it does not mean that your love was fragile, it only means that the point within you from where the feeling of happiness was coming has become insensitive because of frequent use. If she goes away for three or four months, when she returns she can make you feel happy again.

Scientists' experiments on mice are very revealing. They opened up the brain of a mouse, and a sort of window was kept open to observe what happens when a mouse is having sexual intercourse. The particular point through which the electric current was passing mouse ejaculated was marked. After that, that point was connected to an electrode, and the "window" was closed. The other end of the electrode was connected to a machine which can release a controlled amount of electricity. There was a switch, which could be operated by pressing it, which would release electricity -- the same intensity of electricity as flowed at the time of the mouse's ejaculation.

The mouse was taught how to operate the switch, and whenever it pressed it, the required amount of electricity was released by the machine, and that activated the point of the brain connected at the other end of the wire, giving the mouse the same pleasure as in sexual intercourse. The mouse felt very happy when it pressed the switch; it was so happy that it began to press the switch again and again. You will be surprised to know that the rat did not do anything else after that for the next twenty-four hours. It simply went on pushing the button -- six thousand times within each hour. It did not bother to eat or drink or sleep, but just kept pressing the switch until finally it collapsed, exhausted!

The scientist who was doing the experiment said that the mouse enjoyed the pleasure of sex so much -- more than it had ever done through intercourse, although it was not actually having intercourse but only experiencing sexual pleasure because of the electrical current released in its brain. The scientist claimed that very soon that same sensation would lose its charm for the mouse and become very ordinary.

The day we are able to connect the human brain to an electrode to receive the right electrical current at the right point, we will not be able to find anyone who will actually want to take part in sex -- because he gains practically nothing, and loses a lot of energy. He can have a small battery-operated device in his pocket, and whenever he wants to he

can activate the sex center and experience the same joy as in sexual intercourse. But this has its own dangers.

Once it is possible to locate the various centers in the brain for doubt or for anger and so on, those centers can be surgically removed. The center connected with rebellion can be disconnected and man will become very docile. The government can misuse such scientific achievements.

Scientists do not know it, but it may be that with the help of scientific instruments we can provide a milieu like that which exists in a temple. The experiences which took hours, months and years to obtain with sound effects in a temple can be more easily created with scientific instruments. So I am saying that the temple was based on a very scientific foundation, and through using the medium of sound, feelings of happiness, peace, love and bliss were aroused. And in the presence of those feelings your whole attitude towards life was transformed.

On the other hand, what the scientists might do might be full of great dangers. The main danger is that whatever science does becomes technological, and consciousness does not play a part in it. It may be possible, with the use of electrical instruments, to bring about the same state as is possible through being in a temple, but then real transformation of consciousness will not be possible. The heights of consciousness and transformation cannot happen that way; what a man can get by pressing a switch will not bring about any fundamental transformation.

So I do not see any possibility that such instruments will fulfill the need for temples.

You may wonder if temples can be used today in these changed times. Yes, it is possible, but the conventional orthodox priest who is in the temple today will not be able to explain what was happening and how, in temples in ancient times. He still has the key but he does not have any idea of the hidden secrets behind it. The whole philosophy and science of temples can still be of use today. And we can create better temples now because we have better building materials. We can set up a whole sound system in such a way that sound can be magnified a thousandfold. Walls can be made that are so sensitive that if you chant the mantra "Aum" once, the walls will echo it thousands of times.

Today we have better instruments, but we should know the key which unlocks the secrets of our being.

In the old days there had to be at least one door in a temple, but now we can build a temple without any doors. In the old days generally the people who built the temples were living in houses like huts, made of cow-dung and clay. They did the best they could within their limitations, and what they did was great. Today we have wonderful technological skills, but we are not able to benefit from them.

So far we have been discussing the benefit of temples on those who entered them. But temples have their external significance and utility as well. So far we have discussed how a devotee would go into a temple and go deeper into meditation and prayer. But even a person just passing by a temple was also benefitted, though now that does not happen; today even those who go inside come out with nothing. But in those days the temple could help a person who had just been near it because those who were inside the temple were really doing something. Hundreds of devotees in the temple were activating special sound vibrations by which the whole atmosphere of the temple became charged.

The temple was not just vibrating within, it was also vibrating outside, and spreading subtle waves outside as well. The whole environment became alive because the temple itself was alive.

The significance of a living temple was only this much. A living idol signified the same thing; they affected even those who had not come there for any particular benefit. A temple could only be called living if someone could pass by it casually and suddenly sense that the air had changed and the atmosphere had been transformed, even though he might not have known that there was a temple in the vicinity.

Suppose you are walking along a road on a dark night, and when you pass by a temple you experience some sudden change within you.... You were thinking of doing something wrong, and suddenly your thoughts change. You were thinking of killing someone, and suddenly you feel full of compassion. But this can happen only if the temple is charged. Every brick and stone of that temple, the doors and gates, should have become vibrant; then the whole temple will vibrate with sound.

A unique method is used to charge the bell that hangs in front of temples: whoever enters, rings the bell. He does it with total consciousness, not with a sleepy mind. When you ring the bell of a temple -- not half asleep but with alertness -- that creates a discontinuity in your thoughts, a sort of break in the chain of your thoughts, and you become aware of a changed atmosphere. There is a similarity between the sound of the bell and the sound of "Aum"; in fact there is some inner relationship. The sound of the bell continues charging the temple all the day long and the sound of "Aum" also charges the temple with its vibrations.

Many other things like that were made use of in the temple, they have their inner connections. It might be an earthen lamp filled with ghee, the burning of incense, or the use of sandalwood paste or flowers or any other fragrance -- all were related. It was not a question of a particular deity liking a specific flower, it was a question of the harmony of the temple. What type of sound and what type of fragrance was harmonious with the temple was decided through experiences. Only a certain flower with a certain fragrance which blended harmoniously with a certain sound was used; others with different fragrances were prohibited.

In a mosque only lobhan, benzoin oil creosote, could be used as incense, and dhoop and agarbatti incense in a temple. All these had their connections with sound. With the sound of "Allah," there is an inner harmony with the fragrance of lobhan. These links or connections were all discovered through the inner search for the ultimate; they were not found through any thinking process. I will tell you how this was done.

You may sit in a room where no lobhan has been burnt and repeat, "Allah" -- not just "Allah" but "Allahooh" with a special emphasis on "hoo." You will find that slowly that "Allah" sound disappears and automatically only "hoo" will go on being repeated. When this happens, suddenly you will find that your whole room is fragrant with the smell of lobhan. It was discovered that lobhan is similar to a substance that emanates from you. So lobhan is burnt in mosques with a view to helping people repeat "Hoo." Then the process is twofold: the emanation of the fragrance from within a person may take some time, but the same fragrance can initially be provided outwardly in the mosque. But the repetition of "Aum" can never bring about the fragrance of lobhan. This sound strikes another center which cannot produce this smell.

There are separate areas of fragrance within our body, and these are linked with our thoughts and feelings.

That is why Jainas believe that Mahavira's body never gave out any bad odor. His body had a certain fragrance, on the basis of which it was possible to recognize a tirthankara. In Mahavira's time, eight other people claimed to be tirthankaras, but this particular fragrance was not coming from them. None of them was less knowledgeable than Mahavira, they were of the same spiritual stature, but they were not practitioners of that system of spiritual discipline which produces this fragrance, so their claims were rejected.

Buddha also was in no way inferior to Mahavira. He was of the same caliber and state of consciousness as Mahavira, but because he was not following the same method as Mahavira, his body could not emit the same type of fragrance. That fragrance had also emanated from Parshwanath, a tirthankara who had died long before Mahavira's time. His contemporaries were still living and they confirmed that Mahavira's fragrance was similar to Parshwanath's. The ultimate result of a certain mantra process was that particular. The ultimate result of a certain mantra process was that particular fragrance.

This was a memory-based arrangement for determining the authenticity of a tirthankara. So though Mahavira never claimed that he was a tirthankara, he was readily proclaimed to be one. Makhkhali Goshal, on the other hand, did make the claim but could not prove it. You may wonder at how fragrance was used as the criterion. The test had to be that deep and infallible -- words cannot be relied on. The whole individuality of that person should emit the special fragrance that would indicate that a certain flowering had happened within him, that the culmination of the mantra process which gives birth to a tirthankara had happened.

Makhkhali Goshal, Ajitkesh Kambal and Sanjay Vilethiputra were all claimants, were very knowledgeable, were of equal caliber to Mahavira -- each of them had thousands of followers who claimed that their master was a tirthankara -- but they all disappeared into oblivion. On the other hand, Mahavira was absolutely silent on this point and never made any claim. But in the end it was decided that only that person's body that omitted that particular fragrance could be a tirthankara.

Every mantra creates its own fragrance. Those who have practiced chanting "Aum" have known a certain fragrance. Similarly, every mantra produces a particular type of inner light. How much light should be provided in a temple was decided on the basis of that inner light -- neither more nor less. The ignorance of those who sit under dazzling electric lights in temples is simply amazing. They are not needed at all, because only that much light is needed as is within the inner sky -- a very soft and inoffensive light. So a ghee lamp was used because it is not at all offensive and does not dazzle the eyes.

It may not be easy to understand the difference between a kerosene light and the ghee light because we have never experimented with meditating on light. Light a lamp filled with kerosene oil and concentrate on the flame for one hour: your eyes will start burning and become tired and painful. Then light another lamp with ghee in it, and concentrate on that flame for one hour: your eyes will feel cooler and soothed. The inner experiences of thousands of people revealed all this, and parallels were found which became external aids. Of course, it is not possible to provide a lamp exactly the same as the inner light, so only the most approximate was found. The exact fragrance which is

produced within you after chanting a particular mantra cannot be found outside, so we have to be content with the nearest approximation.

Sandalwood paste became popular in all temples. The place on the forehead where the sandalwood paste is applied is called the agyna chakra in Yoga. Practicing certain mantras produces an inner experience of sandalwood perfume, but the source of that fragrance is the agya chakra. Whenever the third eye experience intensifies, the sandalwood perfume is given out, so the sandalwood perfume has become symbolic of that experience, hence we apply sandalwood paste to the forehead. When the agya chakra emits this fragrance there is a sort of coolness felt, as if you have put a piece of ice on the third eye. There is a difference between cooling things and soothing things -- just the same as between a kerosene oil lamp and a lamp filled with ghee.

Ice is cold, but it is not balmy or soothing. The cooling sensation of ice lasts only a short while and is followed by a feeling of heat. Ice is certainly cold, but not soothing or balmy. The ultimate feeling is bound to be that of heat; you feel a little more hot than before. But sandalwood paste is balmy and not cold; it only soothes. Coolness has a kind of depth. If ice is put on the agya chakra it will only make the surface cold. If sandalwood is applied to the agya chakra you will feel that its soothing effect is seeping into deeper layers beyond the skin. The coolness has to penetrate to where the third eye is located.

Those who experienced the working of the agya chakra and felt its balmy effect looked for a parallel and found it in sandalwood paste. It has the same fragrance as that which emanates from within.

All these external aids are just parallels. And when a temple is equipped with them, it becomes charged. So there is a stipulation that no one should go to a temple without a bath. Taking a cold bath breaks one's mechanicalness and thought associations. Nobody was allowed to enter the temple without ringing the bell. And nobody was to go into the temple in old or dirty clothes; in fact silk clothes had to be worn when visiting a temple, because silk helps in generating body electricity and protecting it, so silk clothes always remain fresh, however much you wear them.

All these precautions and arrangements made the temple charged, and so anyone also just passing by was affected by the magnetic field of the temple.

It is said about Mahavira that within a certain radius around him -- wherever he might be -- it was impossible to commit any violence. It was his charged field, within which no violence was possible. He was like a walking temple, and within that sphere anything happening would suddenly be changed.

Teilhard de Chardin coined a new word, noosphere, in place of "atmosphere." Atmosphere means the external environment. Noosphere means the mental or psychological situation, and within that field, certain types of happenings do not take place at all.

In earlier days, schools were conducted by rishis. The surrounding atmosphere of the schools was considered pure, inviolable. If anything wrong happened among the disciples, the rishi punished himself, not them, because it meant that the field had lost its essential quality -- so the disciples couldn't be blamed. To reprimand them was futile; some untoward event only meant that the field had lost its sanctity. So the master himself would repent, undergo a fast and purify himself.

But this idea was misunderstood by Gandhi. Self-purification was not meant to be a way to reprove anyone else, it was not intended to put pressure on another person. The

idea was not to torture oneself or to go on fasting to death to change someone else's heart or conscience. Gandhi didn't understand. The rishi was not purifying himself to change somebody else, he was doing it to recharge the field or purify the surroundings. If the thinking pattern is transformed, if the mental sphere is transformed, If the thinking pattern is transformed, if the mental sphere is transformed, the man living within it will also become transformed. There was no question of changing someone's conscience but of changing the surroundings and the magnetic field everybody carries around themselves.

People like Mahavira were like walking temples. Such people cannot be expected to stay permanently in one particular place. So we need something else, more stable, which can become the center of life for a whole town -- something around which the lives of people will go on being transformed. We ng around which the lives of people will go on being transformed. We need a place, a temple, where we make our daily offerings and receive something in return. We may not even be aware what is happening, everything happens by itself. Anyone passing by the temple received something invaluable. There was a huge magnetic field created around it, and just as an iron filing attracted by a magnet is caught in its magnetic field, so anyone passing by the temple would be attracted and influenced by its energy. The field of a temple was like that.

It is said about Moses that when he went to the mountain he saw a divine fire burning there. The whole bush was on fire, but in the middle of it there were some flowers in full bloom and green leaves. Moses had set out in search of God. He immediately stepped towards the bush and then suddenly heard a voice coming from it, saying, "You foolish man! Leave your shoes a few paces away before entering this bush!" There was no demarcation li undergrowth -- so Moses continued walking further, looking for the border where he could leave his shoes. When he crossed a certain point, he ceased to be Moses; something within him changed. Just outside the border he left his shoes, entered the field and prayed for forgiveness for desecrating that sacred place.

A temple has a charged field around it which is very vibrant, and that field had a helpful influence on the entire village. It is not a fiction; results were actually achieved. The characteristic simplicity, innocence and purity of Indian villages for thousands of years was more due to the charged field of the temples than to the villages themselves. However poor a village, the existence of a temple in it was absolutely necessary. Without a temple everything seemed chaotic, without a rhythm.

For thousands of years villages had a sort of sacredness, and there were great, invisible sources of that sacredness. The worst thing which could be done to destroy the Eastern culture was to destroy that charged field of the temples. With these vibrant temples destroyed, the entire Eastern culture crumbled. That is why today people are skeptical about the value of temples. Whoever has gone to school or college and has been taught only languages and logic -- who has only developed his intellect and his heart is closed -- never has any experience of the life of the temple. So temples are slowly losing their significance.

India cannot be India again until temples become alive again. The whole alchemy of India was in its temples; from its temples India received everything. There was a time when everything that happened in the life of a person was considered to be because of the temple. If he was sick he went to the temple, if he was unhappy he ran to the temple;

even if he was happy he ran to the temple to give thanks. If something good happened in the family he went to the temple with fruits and flowers; if there were problems he would go to the temple to pray. For him the temple was all and everything. All his hopes, expectations and ambitions revolved around the temple. However poor he was, he kept the temple decorated with gold and silver and all sorts of jewels.

Today we think all that extravagance for the temple is mad. How stupid, when people are dying of hunger, that new temples are being built! Stop this! Make hospitals and schools; let the temples be opened up for refugees, let them be used. Because we have forgotten the real use of temples they have become useless. We think, "Why should gold and silver and jewels lie in temples when people are starving to death?" But it is worth remembering that only such hungry people have given the gold and diamonds to the temples; whatsoever they felt to be the most valuable, they gave to the temple, because whatsoever they had known of great value in their life, they learnt from the temple. There was nothing which would sufficiently repay their debt, so whatever they had they gave. Whatsoever was done was done for a reason, because nothing can continue for thousands of years without good reason. The invisible fruits of the temples' influence were continuously being received. There were clear and conscious benefits to being near a temple.

Man always forgets. Whatever is very high and of value we forget; whatever is trivial and commonplace we remember continually, twenty-four hours a day. We have to make an effort to remember God, but our desires and passions don't need to be remembered, they are there all the time. Going downhill is easy; going uphill is always difficult.

So the temple was built in the center of the village so that during the day one could go there as frequently as needed. It kept the search alive. Very few of us naturally remember what we are looking for; most of us only feel inspired when we actually see things. When there were no airplanes, we didn't have any desire to travel by airplane. Yes, someone like the Wright Brothers did dream of fly because they invented the airplane, but the ordinary person won't have such dreams unless he sees an airplane.

So when we could see godliness personified within the shape of a temple, something of godliness lingered on in our minds. This was especially so for people who could not visualize the unmanifest god. For those who could, there was no need for a temple. But in one way these people caused great harm to the temple because they said there was no use for temples and that they should be dispensed with.

I myself used to say that temples are useless, remove them; but slowly I began to realize that if temples are destroyed, how will those who can't visualize an unmanifest form of godliness be ever able even to think of godliness? From that angle sometimes difficulties do arise. If a person like Mahavira, who never needed a temple, speaks from his level of consciousness, he may want temples removed; but if he thinks about your need, he will stop saying so.

The temple remains a source of inspiration for the twenty-four hours of our day. You remember that there is one more door in life other than your shop or house, apart from your wife and wealth... a dimension which is neither part of the market nor of desires. It gives you neither wealth, nor fame, nor the satisfying of desires; the temple reminds you of that continuously. There are moments in life when you are tired of the marketplace, bored with your family: in such moments you can find harmony in the temple.

If the temple is destroyed then there is no other alternative. If you are tired of the food at home, you can go to a hotel or restaurant. If you are tired of the market, where will you go? The temple provides a different dimension, away from the world of give and take. So those who made temples like the marketplace have destroyed them. The temple is not a place for bargaining, it is a place for rest and relaxation, where, tired and exhausted from all your worldly activities you can find relief and peace. There are no conditions to enter the temple, the temple accepts you as you are. There does exist a place so simple that you are accepted as you are.

Many times you have become tired of the type of life you are living. At such times you might have felt the door to prayer open. And if even once the door opens then it can open again and again, even in your shop and your home. Whenever you want, that door should be easy for you to reach at any time -- because the moments that can be call truly great come rarely. It is not necessary to go on a pilgrimage, or in search of a Mahavira or Buddha. Such moments are too short-lived. There should be somewhere just near at hand which you can simply enter.

Childhood memories are very important. Scientists say that by the age of seven a child learns almost all the fundamentals; on that the superstructure of his knowledge is built. Very little that is new is added, but a of his knowledge is built. Very little that is new is added, but a few basic things can be added. If we are not able to form an association with the temple in the child's mind by the time he is seven then it becomes difficult, even impossible, to do so later. A lot of effort will be needed and then too the memory will only be superficial.

That is why we wanted the temple to be the child's first memory after birth. His surrounding were planned in such a way that he would grow up near the temple, gradually coming to know it and absorbing it in his life. The temple would become an integral part of his being, and when he entered the worldly life, the temple would have its own special place inside him because was to provide a retreat for him during all the hectic activities of his life. So we wanted the temple to have a place in his mind from his very birth; later on it would be difficult....

All those who lived in the vicinity of the temple had an impression of it imprinted on their minds. It went so deep into their unconscious that it was no longer a matter of thought but became a part of their being. So all the world over, the forms and shapes of temples may have differed, but the temple was indispensable.

Now in the world that is being shaped the temple is not considered indispensable; other things have taken that place -- schools, hospitals and position; other things have taken that place -- schools, hospitals and libraries. But they are very material and have no connection at all with the beyond. Instead, what is needed is something which indicates the transcendental. When we get up in the morning, we should hear the temple bells ringing; when we go to sleep at night, we should hear the religious songs from the temple.

There is an incident in Mahavira's life.... A thief was lying on his deathbed, and his son asked him to give him some final word of advice that would help him in his work. The thief said, "Don't have anything to do with a person called Mahavira. If you know he is in your village, run to another. If he passes your way on the road, hide somewhere on a

side street. And if without realizing it you are somewhere where you can hear his words, close you beware of him!"

When the son asked him why he should be so afraid of Mahavira, his father told him not to argue: "Just listen to what I say. If you go near that man our business will be in danger and the family will starve."

What happens next is very interesting. The son of that thief always ran away from Mahavira, but one day he made a mistake. Mahavira was sitting silently in a mango grove, and, unknowingly, the thief's son happened to pass that way. Suddenly yyhavira started speaking. The thief heard half the sentence, closed his ears and ran. But he had already heard half the sentence, and that landed him in a lot of trouble.... He was being chased by the police -- the whole state police were after him for his thieving -- and after a few weeks he was eventually caught.

Thieving was in his family and so he was an expert in his trade. He was so clever that he never left behind any incriminating evidence. It was well known that he was a thief and had committed a lot of thefts; everybody knew about it, but there was no evidence. So there was no alternative but to make him confess.

He was made totally drunk and kept in such a state of intoxication that he remained unconscious for two or three days. When he did open his eyes again, he was still in a state of semi-consciousness. All around him he say beautiful women standing and he asked where he was. He was told that he had died, and that preparations were being made to take him either to heaven or hell. He was told that people were waiting for him to become conscious so that he could confess the sins he'd committed. If he did, he would be taken to heaven; otherwise he would be sent to hell. If he spoke the truth he would be saved.

He felt that now he should tell the truth and not lose the chance of going to heaven; now that he had died there was nothing to fear. But just at that moment he remembered that half-sentence he had heard Mahavira say. Mahavira had been talking about gods and ghosts. He had also hinted about the yamadoots, who take people to the worlds beyond death. The thief had heard him say that the toes of yamadoots are always inverted: he opened his eyes and saw that the feet of the people standing by him were normal, so he became alert. He now saw there was no need to confess. He saw through the trick, and said that he had not committed any sins; what could he confess? If they wanted they could take him to hell. But as he hadn't committed any sins, how could they? So they had to let him go.

He went running to Mahavira, fell at his feet, and asked him to complete the sentence which had saved him. When half of Mahavira's sentence had saved him, of how much more benefit would be the whole sentence! He said he was totally surrendered to Mahavira. Sometime or other he was bound to be caught and hanged but if he heard the rest of the sentence he might still be saved. So Mahavira used to say that even if half the sentence of an awakened one was heard, it could be useful one day.

Similarly, a man running past a temple, or just passing by casually, hears the sound vibrations coming from a temple or smells the fragrance of the place... and even that can be of help to him.

Chapter title: Alchemical Secrets of Places of Holy Pilgrimage
6 June 1971 pm in Woodlands, Bombay, India

In the Pacific Ocean there is a small island, Easter Island, on which there are one thousand huge stone idols, all about seventy feet tall. The population of the island is just two hundred. It was found, when that island was first discovered, that it was so small, it couldn't produce food for more than two hundred people. When only two hundred people can live there, it was surprising to find such huge stone idols and as many as one thousand! Five idols for every person! Those people would not have been able to make such huge idols even if they wanted to, because their lives are spent in taking care of their day to day needs. What could be the purpose of those idols? Who would have made them and why? Many questions arose for historians.

In central Asia there is another place that is equally puzzling. It could have been meant to be used for an airport, but as long as airplanes were not made, that wasn't possible. The area seemed to be developed fifteen to twenty thousand years ago. Only after the airplane was invented could we understand its use, could we understand that that place in central Asia must once have served as an airport.

I am telling you these things to convey to you the idea that we will not be able to understand the significance of places of pilgrimage until we ourselves realize the need to have them.

When the idols of Easter Island were photographed from airplanes, it could be imagined that they were installed at certain geometrical points, in such a way that they could be seen from the moon on particular nights. Those who have studied this subject think that we, in this century, are not the first people to look for life on other planets. Many times before experiments and attempts have been made to find animals and other forms of life on other planets so that communication could be established with them. Not only that, but beings from other planets also seem to have made contact with our earth.

These twenty feet long idols are not meaningful in themselves, but when their whole pattern is observed from a plane there are indications of some signs and secret messages. Those signs could only be read from the moon. But as long as we had not seen the idols from a plane we could not imagine their possible use; they were still then just idols. In the same way there are many things on this earth about which we will know nothing until our civilization investigates and sets up a similar situation again.

Just three or four days ago, I was talking about a small iron box which was found in Tehran. It was kept in The British Museum for a long time, for many years it was just lying there. Now it has been found to be a type of battery which was used in Tehran about two thousand years ago. It was beyond the imagination that in Tehran, two thousand years ago, such a battery existed. But now it is an established fact that it is a battery. If we had not invented the storage battery we would never have been able to imagine that that such a box could be a battery.

A tirtha, a sacred place of pilgrimage, is a unique invention, very deep and symbolic, made by an ancient civilization. But our present civilization has lost all knowledge about the significance of such places. Today visiting a place of pilgrimage is just a dead ritual for us. We just tolerate them, without knowing why places of pilgrimage were established, what their use was and who made them.

Whatever can be seen from the surface is not everything. There are some hidden meanings which are not visible from the outside. We should understand first that our civilization has lost the purpose and meaning of the sacred place of pilgrimage and so today people who go on a pilgrimage waste their time. Those who oppose the idea are also wasting their time, however right they seem to be, because they know nothing about such places. Neither the people who visit the places of pilgrimage, nor those who oppose the idea know the purpose of them, so let us understand a few things about them....

There is a famous place of pilgrimage for Jainas known as Samved Shikhar. Twenty-two out of the twenty-four tirthankaras of the Jainas have died there, have left their bodies there. It all seems to have been pre-arranged; otherwise it is impossible that out of twenty-four, twenty-two should happen to die, with long periods of time between them, in the same place. If we believe the Jainas there is a gap of one hundred thousand years between the first and the twenty-fourth tirthankara. That twenty-two of them died in the same place is worth thinking about.

The place of pilgrimage for Moslems is the Kaaba. Until the time of Mohammed, there were three hundred and sixty-five idols in Kaaba -- a different idol for each day of the year. All these idols were removed or destroyed, but the central stone which was the center of the temple was not removed. The Kaaba is more ancient than the Muslims' religion. The history of Islam is only about fourteen hundred years old, but that black stone in the Kaaba is hundreds of thousands of years old.

Another interesting fact is that the stone does not seem to belong to our earth. How did it come to earth? The only hypothesis we have is that it is part of a meteor. Within twenty-four hours of the disintegration of a meteor, thousands of stone fragments fall to the earth. Many of these are burnt up before they reach the earth. At night when we see stars falling -- these are not stars but meteors. Sometimes even huge stones manage to reach the earth; these stones are of a different composition. The stone at Kaaba is such a stone.

But some people who have gone deeper into this feel that such big stones could have been brought to earth and left here, just as our astronauts have left a few things from earth on the moon. Whatever the astronauts have left on the moon will remain there safely, even if there is a nuclear war and life on this earth is destroyed. If ever some civilization reaches the moon, they will be very surprised to see those things we have left there.

So the stone at Kaaba may not be part of a meteorite but may have been left by some inhabitants of another planet. Perhaps it was once possible to establish a connection with those inhabitants through the medium of that stone. But now, only the worship of it has remained. The science of how it might have been used as a means of communication is lost.

An unmanned Russian spaceship became lost because its radio contact with the earth broke, so it was not possible to trace it. Whether it was burnt up, destroyed, or is still somewhere in space is not known. But if it has landed on some planet, and if the inhabitants of that planet could repair the radio they could re-establish contact with the earth. Otherwise they might break it up, or store it in their museum. They may even be afraid of it, may wonder at it or they may even start to worship it. The Kaaba stone may be one such instrument sent out by spacemen from some other planet to establish contact with the earth.

I am telling you this only as an illustration to explain that a sacred place of pilgrimage was a means to establish contact, not with any living beings in space but with enlightened souls who once lived on this earth.

A very deep and intense experiment on Samved Shikhar was made by the twenty-two tirthankaras, just as they were leaving their bodies. On that mountain they tried to intensify and multiply the vibrations of their developed consciousness so that it would be easier for us to communicate with them. It was thought that if so many souls of such consciousness left their body from the same place, a path between that place and another plane could be laid. And such a path has existed.

The rainfall is not the same everywhere on earth: there are some areas of heavy rain, where it rains as much as five hundred inches, and desert areas where there is no rain or it is very scarce. Similarly there are places which are very cold, where there is nothing but snow everywhere; and there are areas so hot that it is difficult to make ice. In the same way on the earth there are places with high density consciousness and low density consciousness. Conscious attempts have been made to create areas of high consciousness, fields charged with human consciousness. They do not happen automatically, but are a result of the consciousnesses of powerful individuals.

Twenty-two tirthankaras traveling to that one mountain, entering samadhi and leaving their bodies there, created a highly charged field of consciousness, in some special sense, at Samved Shikhar. It was intended that if someone sits there, chanting the special mantras given by those twenty-two tirthankaras, his journey in out-of-the-body experiences will immediately begin. This is as scientific an experiment as any which takes place in a laboratory.

The only reason for creating the places for pilgrimage was to experiment with creating powerfully charged fields of conscious energies, so that anyone could easily begin his inner journey.

There are two methods of making a boat move. One method is to open the sails at the right time in the direction of the wind and not use the oars; the other method is not to open the sails, but to help the boat move with the use of the oars. The places of pilgrimage are places where a stream of consciousness is flowing automatically: you just have to stand in the middle of the stream where the sails of your consciousness open up and you begin your journey onwards. You will be able to travel far more easily and faster in such places than anywhere else, and alone. Elsewhere, you may unknowingly reach some negative place and open up your sails in the wrong direction: you may move further away from your destination and become lost.

For example, if you are sitting in meditation at a place which is full of negative emotions -- where butchers are killing animals the whole day -- there will be a great struggle and conflict in your mind. In meditation you become very receptive, open and vulnerable, so whatever is happening around you at that time enters you. So when you meditate it is always necessary to choose a place which will not take you in a wrong direction. Whenever, during meditation, you have disturbing thoughts or find it difficult to be silent, move from such a place.

You can sit in meditation in a jail too, but that requires a very strong individuality. There are different methods to help you meditate in a jail: you create a line of demarcation over which negative forces cannot enter.

But in a tirtha, a holy pilgrimage place, such a line is not necessary. In such a place you drop all resistance and open all your doors and windows. There, positive energy is flowing in abundance. Hundreds of people have traveled into the unknown from there and have created a path. It is as if they have made a path by cutting down trees and removing the bushes blocking the path, so that those walking behind them find it easier to travel. On the religious path, efforts are made by the higher, stronger consciousnesses to help weaker people, in every way. The place of pilgrimage was one such experiment.

A place of pilgrimage is where the currents are flowing from the body towards the soul, where the whole atmosphere is charged; from where people have achieved samadhi, from where people realized their enlightenment. Such places have become specially charged. In such a place, if you just open your sails, without doing nothing else, your journey will begin.

So all religions have established their places of pilgrimage. Even those religions which were against temples have done it. It is surprising that religions that were against idol worship and temples established places of pilgrimage. It was easy to remove idols, but places of pilgrimage could not be removed because such places have a value which no religions could oppose or deny.

Jainas are not basically idol worshipers, nor are Mohammedans nor Sikhs nor Buddhists; in the beginning Buddhists were not idol worshipers at all. But all of them have established their sacred places of pilgrimage. They had to. Without such places there is no meaning for a religion. If there were no such places, everything would have to be done by the individual, and in that case there would be no meaning or purpose in a religious commune.

The word tirtha means a sort of jumping board from where one can take a dive into the infinite ocean. The Jaina word tirthankara means a creator of a tirtha, of a place of pilgrimage. A person can only be called a tirthankara if he has charged an area into which ordinary people can enter, open themselves up and begin their inner search. Jainas call them not incarnations but tirthankaras. A tirthankara is a greater phenomenon than an incarnation, because if the divine enters a human form it is good, but if a man makes a place for others to enter the divine, it is a far higher event.

Jainism does not believe in a god, it believes in man's potential. That is why Jainas could benefit more deeply from the tirtha and the tirthankaras than followers of any other religion. In the Jaina religion there is no concept of "God's grace" or "God's compassion." Jainas do not think that God can give any help; the seeker is alone and has to travel by his own effort and energy.

But then there are two ways in which he can travel.On the first, every man has to travel in his own boat, with the strength of his own hands, using the oars. One out of many may succeed. But on the second path you can take the help of the winds and open up your sails so that you can travel faster and more easily.

But are such "spiritual winds" available? This is the whole purpose of the places of pilgrimage.

Is it possible that when a person like Mahavira is there, all around him, from some unknown direction, a flow of energy begins? Can he create an energy flow in a particular direction so that if anyone enters that current he will just be carried along by it and will reach his ultimate destiny?

In fact, this flowing in a spiritual direction is the holy pilgrimage.

There are physical indications of such places of pilgrimage, but as time passes, those signs may disappear. So they have to be protected by building temples or erecting huge idols so that the footprints of those great seers can be preserved. Great care has to be taken so that those places do not shift even by an inch from where the event had happened sometime in the past.

Great treasures have been hidden underground for which a search is going on even today. For example, the richest treasure on earth, for which a search is going on -- that of the last czar of Russia -- have been buried somewhere in America. It is certain that such a treasure was hidden there because the czar was only dethroned in 1917, not long ago. On a map, the exact location is available, but the description cannot be decoded. Similarly the hidden treasures of the Gwalior king's family is somewhere in Gwalior. There is a map, but the exact location cannot be decoded. Such maps are made in a secret code, otherwise they might fall into the wrong hands.

Similarly the places of pilgrimage places are well indicated, but the exact place where the spiritual event took place may not be known. Such places are hidden from ordinary people. This is very confusing. You may go to some place where it is said Mahavira reached nirvana, but there is a great possibility that the exact spot is a little away from the place shown to everyone. The real location is shown only to those people who are authentic and deserving seekers. There, those people can bow down in respect and return home. The real location will be kept hidden for those who come there out of an authentic spiritual search and who need that help for the jump.

There are many such places.... In one Arab country there is a small village called Alkufa where no civilized man has been able to enter. We have gone to the moon, but no traveler has yet entered that small village. Up till now it has not been possible to locate this village. There is no doubt about its existence, because history mentions it and there are also maps available. The location is hidden for a special purpose. When some Sufi reaches a deep state of consciousness during meditation, he finds the key to the path; he is able to visualize the whole of Alkufa. Otherwise, whatever maps are available are false, to misguide people.

Many pilgrims from Europe have tried to reach Alkufa for the last three centuries. Many of them died before they could return. Those who did come back, didn't reach the village but had just been roaming around. One can reach only through a special meditation, during which Alkufa becomes manifest. Once he sees the place he caught a glimpse of in meditation the Sufi meditator walks to it. Alkufa is a secret holy place, more ancient than Islam. The places of pilgrimage which are well known and can be visited by any pilgrim are not the real ones; the real one is nearby, but hidden.

An interesting incident happened.... When Vinoba Bhave, Gandhi's chief disciple, went to the Vishwanath temple in Benares. with harijans -- India's lowest caste -- Karpatriji, an orthodox Brahmin scholar, said, "You may enter, but now we shall have to make another temple, because this one has been desecrated." He actually began constructing another, because to him the old temple had become useless. Superficially, Vinoba seems a more understanding person than Karpatri. Karpatri was very traditional and ignorant of the modern world's trends and knowledge. But regarding the deep secret that he was trying to support, he seems to be more knowledgeable.

The truth is that the Vishwanath temple is not the real one, and the one Karpatri wanted to have built instead of it, wouldn't be the real one either. The real temple is a

third one, which has to be kept hidden, otherwise any socio-religious reformer would desecrate it. The Vishwanath temple which is now standing is already desecrated. There is no difficulty in desecrating a temple; you can if you want to. Any other temple being built there will also be false, but a false one will always have to be there so that the real one can remain hidden.

There are secret keys, mantras, through which to enter Vishwanath temple, just as there are for Alkufa. Occasionally, some fortunate seeker, who has the knowledge about the mantra, may be able to enter, but otherwise pilgrims go to the false temple, worship there and return to their home. But this temple has developed a sort of sanctity over thousands of years, even though it is false, because for so long people have believed it to be the true one.

All religions have tried not to allow a person of another religion to enter their temples or places of pilgrimage. Why? Those who made those rules knew the dangers for such entrants. In a way, it is like a notice hanging on the entrance of an atomic energy laboratory, warning, "No entry except for atomic scientists." We agree that such restrictions are necessary -- it is dangerous for non-scientists to enter -- but when such restrictions are made in connection with a temple or place of pilgrimage, we don't agree. We do not know that they also have their own science. These temples and places of pilgrimage are meant for specialists.

It is like a conference of doctors standing around a patient discussing his disease. The patient listens to them but can't understand them because they are talking medical jargon, using Greek and Latin words. It is not in the interest of the patient to understand. Similarly, all religions have developed their own code languages. They have their secret holy places, their secret languages and secret scriptures. So what we understand to be places of pilgrimage are almost certainly not the right places. Such great traditions have to be preserved because if they fall into the wrong hands, they may be misused. Ordinary people will only get into difficulties and will not benefit from them.

It is said that if you are allowed to enter the Sufi village of Alkufa you will become mad. It is said that anyone entering accidentally will leave the village, mad, because Alkufa is full of vibrations which cannot be tolerated by the ordinary mind. So it is better not to enter the town without the necessary preparation and discipline.

It is said that it is not possible to sleep in Alkufa, so it is natural that those who haven't experimented deeply in staying awake will go mad. The greatest accomplishment among Sufis is the night vigil; they keep awake the whole night. If a person does not eat for ninety days he will become very weak, but he will not die or go mad. An ordinary healthy man can easily fast for ninety days, but he cannot remain without sleep for even twenty-one days. He can go without food for three months, but he cannot go without sleep for three weeks. Three weeks is a very long time -- it is difficult to remain without sleep for even one week -- but it is impossible to sleep at all in Alkufa.

A Buddhist bhikkhu was sent to me by someone from Sri Lanka. For three years this bhikkhu had not been able to sleep properly. The whole time his hands and feet were trembling, he was continuously perspiring and he was very disturbed. He was afraid to even take one step -- he had lost all confidence in himself. He was almost deranged. Strong tranquillizers couldn't help him sleep, but only lie down, listless; inwardly he was still awake.

I asked him if he had ever practised Buddha's anapansati yoga, because for a Buddhist bhikkhu this practice is unavoidable. He said he was. So I told him that he should give up the idea of getting any sleep, because anapansati yoga is a practice which makes sleep impossible. But it is only the initial step in a practice; once it is impossible to sleep, there is another practice that must immediately be given. If you continue to do only the first part without this second step, you will become weak; you even may become mad and die.

Once sleep is destroyed from within, the quality of your consciousness changes so much that then further progress can be made. When I asked the bhikkhu if he knew the second phase of that practice he said no one had told him about it. The second part is not mentioned in any book, and writing about only the first part is dangerous because anyone who follows it will be unable to sleep. This was the reason why things were kept hidden, so that they should not harm anyone. They were meant to guide those who need help in their spiritual search.

This is why places of pilgrimages are necessary, but the real ones are kept hidden. The false places are created to keep you off the track until such a time when you are ready for the real. No wrong person should reach the authentic place, but the right person will always find it.

Every place of pilgrimage has its own key. If you want to find the pilgrimage place of the Sufis, you won't be able to with the keys of the Jainas, and the Jaina places of pilgrimage can't be found with the use of Sufi keys. Every religion has its own keys. I do not want to name it, but I shall tell you about the key of one place of pilgrimage.

The Tibetans have special mystical diagrams or yantras. These are keys. Hindus also have such instruments, thousands of them. In their houses, they write words like "Labha-Shubha" -- "Prosperity and Goodness" -- and they write some numbers underneath, without knowing why they are doing it. In their house there may be some such yantra, which can be the key to a place of pilgrimage. They have no idea what they have written, but they go on doing it only because their forefathers were doing it.

Every outwardly created figure creates a figure within your consciousness. For example, if you keep staring at your window for a few minutes and then close your eyes, you will see a negative impression of the window frame. Similarly, if you meditatively concentrate on some instrument, you will create within your mind a negative impression of its particular figure or its digits. These can be seen within after some special meditation practices. If you can invoke these images, then at such moments you can immediately begin your pilgrimage into the spiritual.

There is a story in the life of Mulla Nasruddin.... He lost his donkey -- and that donkey was his only wealth. He searched for him through the whole village. All the villagers joined in the search, but without success. Then the people said that as it was a holy month, and many pilgrims were passing through the town, perhaps the donkey had followed them. Otherwise, they had all searched the town and hadn't been able to find him, so Nasruddin should accept that he was lost.

But Nasruddin said he would make one last attempt to find him. He immediately stood still and closed his eyes. Then he bent down and started walking on all fours. He walked around the house and then the garden, and finally he reached a large pit into which his donkey had fallen. His friends were surprised and asked him what his trick was.

Nasruddin said, "I thought that if a man cannot find a donkey, then the key to finding it is not with him; to find the donkey I have to become like a donkey. So when I began to feel like a donkey, I thought if I was a donkey looking for a donkey where would I look? As soon as I thought that way, I went down on my hands and knees and started walking like a donkey. I do not know how I found the place, but when I opened my eyes, I saw I had reached the pit, and there was my donkey!"

Nasruddin is a Sufi saint. Anyone can read this story and laugh it off as a joke, but there is a key in it. It is a key to searching, and in a spiritual sense, this is the only way to search. So every place of pilgrimage has keys and yantras. The main reason for the existence of such places is that they put you in the middle of a charged current, which you can flow with.

Another important fact is that in the life of man everything except his consciousness is made from matter. But we do not know what that inner consciousness is. We know only our body, and the body is related in every way with matter. So let us now look at another kind of alchemy so that you can understand the second meaning of a place of pilgrimage....

The alchemists' experiments are very deep. Alchemists say that if water is converted into steam, and then that steam back into water, and the water again into steam -- if you do this again and again thousands of times -- then that water acquires a special quality not found in ordinary water. Earlier, this assertion was taken to be a joke: How could the quality of the water change? If you repeatedly distill water what difference can it make? -- the water will remain distilled. But now, science has also accepted the fact that the quality of such water does change, although just how it happens is not known. But there is no doubt that there is a qualitative change in the water, and repeating the experiment hundreds of thousands of times produces a still better quality of water.

You may be aware that seventy percent of our body is made up of water. The chemical composition is just like that of sea water. If you don't eat enough salt, the salt content within your body diminishes, becomes less than that of sea water. If the percentage of salt in your body is changed, there will be changes in your consciousness. If you drink water which has been distilled one hundred thousand times, it brings about changes in many of your desires and attitudes. The alchemists were making such experiments. Distilling water hundreds of thousands of times may take several years, but the alchemist does this.

It brings about two types of changes. The first will be in the alchemist's mind. Doing the same thing again and again can become boring after a few days. If out of boredom he stops the process, he will go back to his old state of mind; but that moment of boredom is the turning point. If he continues in spite of the boredom he will give birth to a new consciousness.

If you go to sleep at ten o'clock every night, then exactly at that time you will feel sleepy. But if you decide not to sleep and keep awake, after half an hour you should become more sleepy, but what actually happens is that you will find you feel more fresh than in the morning. There was a turning point at ten o'clock; it was your habit to sleep then, but if you ignore your habit, then you break the body's automatic arrangement, and when the body realizes that it will have to stay awake it releases fresh energy from a reservoir which it keeps for emergencies and you feel fresher than ever.

Now the person who has distilled water a thousand times becomes bored, but his master will tell him to continue -- maybe it will be for ten or fifteen years. A point comes when he will feel that if he distills the water one more time he will not be able to bear it, he will drop down dead. But his master will insist he continue the process, whatever the consequences. So on one hand the quality of the water will change, and on the other, his consciousness will also slowly become transformed.

It is like the water of the River Ganges. Up to now scientists have not been able to understand why there are certain qualities in its waters which can't be found in the water of any other river of the world. Even the rivers that flow from the same mountain from which the Ganges flows, do not have the same qualities as the Ganges. The mountain is the same, the same clouds shower water over it, the ice of the same peak melts and flows into the waters of all the rivers, but the quality of their water differs. It is difficult to prove the difference, but the whole of the River Ganges is an experiment of alchemists.

It has been attempted to treat the whole river alchemically. That's why Hindus have so many of their holy places on the banks of the Ganges. This was a great experiment to give something special to the waters of the Ganges. Now chemists and scientists have also agreed that there is something special about its waters. If you save the water of any other river it will spoil and go bad, but the water of the Ganges doesn't, however long it is stored. You can keep that water for years without it changing, but if you keep some water of any other river you will find that it becomes foul within a few weeks. The water of the Ganges keeps its purity and remains unchanged for years. It is because of this that Hindus have established their tirthas along the banks of its river.

If you throw dead bodies into other rivers, they become dirty and will begin to smell badly, but the Ganges absorbs thousands of dead bodies without stinking. It is surprising that though bones do not normally dissolve in water, they do in the water of the Ganges -- nothing remains. In the Ganges everything immediately disintegrates, returning to its original elements. Hence the insistence that dead bodies should be thrown into the Ganges, because in any other river they may take years to disintegrate, but the Ganges does the work quickly.

The Ganges does not flow like any ordinary river from a mountain, it has been made to flow. This phenomenon is not easy to grasp. The Gangotri, the so-called place from where the Ganges has its source, is not the real source of the Ganges. Pilgrims go to the Gangotri, make their salutations and then return home. But this is then the false Gangotri, the real has always been hidden and protected for thousands of years. It's not possible to reach there by ordinary means, but only by astral travel. It is not possible to reach there with the physical body.

I told you earlier about Alkufa, the city of the Sufis. There you can reach physically, even unintentionally. If you go in search of it you can be misled by a wrong map, but if you have not set out to search for it, you can just reach there without meaning to, by mistake. So you can stumble across Alkufa -- but the Gangotri cannot be reached with the physical body, only with the astral body. The Gangotri cannot be seen with the physical eyes. In meditation the physical body has to be left behind and then the astral body can travel to the Gangotri; then and then only will one understand what the secret of the special qualities of the water of the Ganges is. At the source from where the Ganges flows its water have been treated alchemically. On both banks of the source of the river Hindus have made places of pilgrimage.

You may wonder why all the Hindus'places of pilgrimage are on the banks of rivers, while all the Jainas' are on mountain tops. Jainas make their places of pilgrimage only on mountains that are absolutely dry and without any greenery. Mountains with vegetation and trees will be rejected; even large mountains like the Himalayas have been ignored. If just any mountain would do there could be none better than those of the Himalayas. But the Jainas wanted a dry mountain, open to the scorching sun, with the least possible vegetation and with no water. The reason is that the alchemical changes which they are experimenting on are connected to the fire element of the body. Hindu alchemy, on the other hand, is related to the water element.

Both have their separate keys. Hindus would never think of having a tirtha not within the vicinity of water, of a river flowing by, with the beauty of green vegetation. They experiment with the element of water, whereas Jainas are working on the fire element and so depend more on the generation of tap, heat, in the body.

Hindu scriptures and sannyasins emphasize the water element, so a Hindu sannyasin consumes sufficient milk, curd and ghee to maintain enough humidity or moisture within his body. Without sufficient moisture, the Hindu key will not function. The whole effort of the Jainas, on the other hand, is to produce a dryness within, so Jaina sadhus don't even take a bath, because they want to preserve a state of dryness. These Jaina sadhus become dirty and they stink! But they are not able to explain why they don't take baths. Why do they only very sparingly wash themselves? Water is not their key, but fire, and the fire element in austerity and self-mortification. They want to arouse fire internally in every possible way. If they pour water on their bodies the fire within will be weakened. So you will find the Jaina sadhu on barren, dry mountains, without greenery and water, where everything is hot and he is surrounded only by stones.

All religions use fasting, but except for Jainism, no religion prohibits water during fasting. Jainas who are householders are advised that even if they can't do without water at other times, at least they should avoid drinking water at night. But they only understand by this that they shouldn't drink at night because they might unknowingly kill unseen germs and insects. In fact, all these rules are meant to intensify the fire element. Another interesting fact is that if a man drinks a minimum of water, as Mahavira used to, it helps to preserve a his celibacy, because the semen will begin to dry up. Even a little moisture can make the semen flow.

So all Jaina places of pilgrimage will be on mountains. The authentic Hindu tirtha will be on the banks of a river, in a beautiful, lush-green place -- but the mountains chosen by Jainas are ugly, because the beauty of a mountain is lost when there is no greenery.

Jaina sadhus will not take a bath or clean their teeth: why use even the amount of water needed for brushing your teeth? The whole principle of dryness has to be understood properly to understand the Jaina scriptures. All of their austerities are to arouse the fire, and if the connection with water is completely broken this is a negative way to keep the fire burning.

Inside us there is a balance of all the elements: if you want to go on a spiritual journey through one of the elements, the balance will have to be broken by dropping the use of the opposite element that balances it. So if you concentrate on the fire element, water will become inimical to your work, because the less water in the body, the better the fire will burn within.

The Ganges is a deep chemical and alchemical experiment, and by taking a bath in the Ganges, an individual will enter the tirtha. As soon as he takes the a bath, the water element within his body is transformed. This transformation will only last a short time, but if the experiment is done properly, the spiritual journey begins. Remember that if someone who has begun living on the water of the Ganges takes any other water, it will not suit him and will create difficulties.

Attempts have been made to create the qualities of the Ganges in many other places, but they have failed because the real keys for doing so are lost. Bathing in the Ganges and then immediately going into a temple or to a holy place is only a way of using the outer for the inner spiritual journey.

The pyramids of Egypt are tirthas of some old, lost civilization. One interesting fact about the pyramids is that there is complete darkness inside. Scientists think that it is not likely that electricity existed when the pyramids were built -- some were constructed ten thousand years ago and others twenty thousand years ago. It is possible that people entered them with the help of burning torches, but there are no signs of smoke anywhere on the walls or ceilings of the pyramids. The paths within the pyramids are very long, with many twists and turns, and along them it is very dark. There could not have been electricity because there are no signs of electric fittings or a source to supply power. Torches burning oil or ghee would have left some signs of smoke. So a problem arises as to how people went inside. If no one went in, as some people suggest, why were so many paths made? There are many paths, staircases, doors and internal windows and also places for people to sit or stand about. But what was all this for? This has remained an unsolved puzzle. Some people guess that the pyramids were a whim of some emperor or king.

The most plausible explanation is that they were tirthas. When someone experiments in the right way with the inner fire, his body emanates a light. Such people were qualified to enter the pyramids. Neither electricity nor torches were ever needed, their body light was sufficient to move around inside the pyramid. But such body light is only produced through special meditative practices. So the producing of that body light was itself the test of certain people's right to enter.

In the early nineteen hundreds, when investigations were being done on the pyramids, one of the scientist's assistants became lost. With the help of search lights they looked for him everywhere -- for twenty-four hours he could not be found. Then after twenty-four hours, some time around twoo'clock in the morning, he came running towards them, almost deranged.

He said, "I was feeling my way in the darkness and I suddenly became aware of an opening. I went through it, and as soon as I did the door shut behind me. When I looked back the door was already closed. Yet when I had first approached it, there was only an open passage, nothing there like a door. But as soon as I entered that part of the passage, a door closed behind me; a heavy rock slid down, sealing off the exit. Then I shouted, but there was no response. I had no choice but to keep walking, and the things I saw...! It's difficult to describe...."

It is true that he was lost for twenty-four hours and that when he was found he was half insane, but what he described as having seen was incredible. The whole search party tried to find the door, but couldn't -- he could neither show where he had entered nor

where he came out -- so it was concluded that the man must have either fainted, or gone to sleep and dreamt. But anyway, whatever he related was made a note of.

Some time after, during further explorations, the group found a book which described similar things to what the man had related. So the mystery deepened. It was thought that these things were in some sealed off room which opened up only under the influence of someone who is in a certain psychic state. Perhaps it had been accidental, perhaps it was a coincidence: triggered by his mental state the man may have been unknowingly become attuned to the state in which the opening happened. It had to be so, because although the man was not able to prove his experience, nevertheless the door did open.

So the secret places about which I am talking have their doors and there are methods through which one can enter them. There are arrangements and special inner spiritual conditions for reaching there. All the rooms and halls of the pyramids have been built in accordance with certain pre-determined measurements. You may have experienced sometimes that where a roof is set rather low, although it does not touch you, you feel that something within you is compressed, contracted. Nothing actually compresses you, but within you something feels compressed. When you enter a place where the ceiling is very high, you have a feeling of something expanding within. The measurements of a room can be calculated in such a way that meditation becomes very easy for you.

The exact measurements for a room that makes meditation most easy were determined after experimentation. Certain measurements of A room can be used either to help you to expand or contract your consciousness. The color scheme outside and inside rooms, the fragrance in the room, and the acoustics also can be devised in such a way as to help meditation.

All tirthas have their own music. In fact all music was born in such places, and the music was originally created by seekers. Not only the art of music, but all dance originated in temples. Fragrance was also first used in temples. When it became known that one could reach the divine with the help of music, it was also realized that through music one could also go astray. If a certain fragrance can help you go toward the divine, then with another fragrance one can also go towards sensuality. If in a certain kind of room one can go into meditation more quickly and easily, there are other kinds which can prevent meditation.

In China there are specially constructed rooms in which prisoners can be brainwashed; the dimensions are predetermined, and changes in the dimensions made brainwashing difficult. After many experiments the exact height, width and breadth of such rooms are determined, and no sooner is a prisoner brought into the room that his mind begins to become affected. The exact time it will take before his mind becomes deranged and begins to deteriorate was also determined. A certain sound was created to speed up the process of deterioration, and if a particular place on his head was hammered, the deterioration would be even faster.

A water pot is suspended above the prisoner's head, water slowly drips onto him in a particular rhythm. Drop by drop, the water falls on that place on his head for twenty-four hours. The prisoner is not allowed to move from that position; he cannot sit, he has to stand. Within half an hour he becomes so bored that the sound seems to become louder and louder, shattering, so much so he will feel as if a mountain is falling on top of him. That repetitive sound in the enclosure for twenty-four hours, in that particularly designed

room, will shatter a person's mind; when he comes out he will not be the same person. In every way the technique will have broken him down.

All methods of helping a seeker were found in tirthas and temples. The bells hanging in the temple, the sounds that emanate, the incense, the flowers -- their fragrance -- were all prearranged. It was all designed to maintain a certain harmony whose continuity would not be broken.

If arati -- a ritual with a lighted lamp -- is to be done, it is always performed at fixed times, for a fixed length of time, in the morning, the afternoon and the evening, and always accompanied by the same mantra or incantation. The ritual goes on at regular intervals year after year for thousands of years.

Just as I told you earlier that when water is repeatedly distilled it changes its quality, if in a room a sound is created thousands of times, the vibrations of that room and the quality of that room changes. If a seeker is taken into that room his transformation will be helped. As our whole individuality is built from matter, whatever changes are brought about in matter will affect our individuality too. Man is such an extrovert that it is easier to change him from the outside, inner changes are difficult in the beginning; so a system was devised through which matter could be arranged to help one transform on a physical level.

There is one other thing to be understood. Ordinary we have the illusion that we are all separate individuals. This is a wrong belief. There are many of us sitting here, but if all of us sit silently separate individuals do not remain but only one individuality. One individuality of silence remains, and our consciousnesses begin to vibrate together and flow into each other.

The tirtha is a mass experiment.

On one special day in a year, hundreds of thousands of people gather at a tirtha -- all with one desire, one expectation. People will come from hundreds of miles away to be together at a certain hour, under a certain star or constellation. With so many people and this one desire, this one expectation, one prayer and one aim, a bridge of consciousness is created. Then there are no longer many individuals.

If we look at the huge gatherings at the Kumbha-Mela festival we do not see one individual; you see just a crowd, without a face. In a crowd separate faces cannot be found -- just a faceless crowd of thousands of people. Who is who? There is no meaning in trying to know. Who is poor and who is rich? Who is a king and who is a beggar? There is no meaning in trying to make a distinction. The consciousnesses of everyone has begun to flow into each other. If a bridge can be made of the consciousnesses of these ten million people, if it can become one integrated consciousness, then it will be easier for the divine to enter than to enter so many individuals separately.

Nietzsche has written somewhere that he was walking in a garden when his foot fell upon one small insect, which immediately contracted and rolled over. Nietzsche was very puzzled as to why it behaved like this. He wrote that after thinking about it for some time, he realized that the insect was trying to decrease its field of contact, to prevent being hurt. With a larger insect there are more possibilities of being trodden on and killed because it takes up a bigger area. So this is the small insect's form of self-protection -- reducing its field of contact.

So when human consciousness forms a bigger contact field, the possibility of the divine descending into it becomes greater. The descending of the divine is a great happening. The greater the happening, the greater a place we have to create for it.

So the original form of prayer was group oriented; individual prayer was born much later, when the individual became more egoistic and it was more difficult for him to melt with others. So from the time individual prayer was done in the world, the real benefits of prayer were lost. In fact, prayer cannot be individual. When we are invoking such a great force as the divine, the larger a contact field we provide, the easier it is for that force to descend.

In this sense, tirthas create large contact fields. Again, when such a field is created at a particular moment, on a particular day, under a certain constellation, and in a particular place, the chances are better.

It should also be understood that the life cycle is periodical. How is it? The monsoon begins at a particular time of the year. If it doesn't it is because of our interference; otherwise it is fairly fixed, even to the day and the hour. Summer and winter also arrive at particular times; and even our bodies work that way. Women's menstruation is regulated, and related in some way with the cycles of the moon. If the body is healthy and normal, after twenty-eight days menstruation occurs. If the cycle is broken, then somewhere within the body of that woman something has gone wrong.

All events repeat in a certain order. If the coming of the divine has happened at a particular moment, on a certain day in a certain month, next year at the same time you can expect it to happen again. That moment has become powerful, and at that moment the divine energy can flow again. So year after year for hundreds of years, people have gathered together to wait at certain places. If this has happened many many times, then the repetition of that event at that moment becomes likely or even certain.

For example, at the time of the Kumbha-Mela festival there are many disputes and quarrels over who will take the first dip in the Ganges, because it is impossible for hundreds of thousands of people to simultaneously have a dip. The special moment is prearranged and of short duration. Who will take the first dip at the right moment? Those will whose traditions have worked for it and searched for the moment; they will be the first.

Sometimes the right moment is just missed. The moment of enlightenment is just like a flash of lightning. It just flashes and becomes lost. If at that moment you are completely open, egoless and totally aware, then there will be the experience of the happening. If at that moment your eyes become blinded or closed, if your awareness has faltered, then the event will be lost to you.

The third use of the tirtha was a mass experiment. The ultimate power could be drawn more easily when people were innocent and simple. So tirthas were more relevant in the distant past -- no one returned empty-handed from them. But the pilgrim of today does return empty-handed, and so he must go again and again. The more innocent and simple a society, the less people were aware of their individual personalities, the more successful was this mass experiment.

Even today, there are primitive tribal communities in which the individual is unaware of his personality. There is less of an idea of "I"; more of "we' is there. There are a few tribal languages in which the word "I" does not exist. Tribals speak in the language

of "we." It is not because of the language that there exists no concept of "I" because their life is so community-bound. That has produced some very surprising results.

On a small island near Singapore, at one time some Westerners led an invasion. The chief of the tribe came to the shore and told the invaders that his people were unarmed but were not going to be slaves. The Westerners insisted on enslaving them -- the tribe refused to fight, but said they knew how to die. The Westerners couldn't believe this, they thought that no one would die just like that. They landed on the island, and five hundred tribesmen gathered together on the seashore. The Westerners could not believe their eyes: First, the chief fell down and died. Then all the others began falling to the ground and dying -- one after the other -- without being hit by any weapon. At first the Westerners thought they were just falling down our of fear, but when they approached them they found that all the tribesmen had actually died.

If the consciousness of "we" is predominant, death can be contagious. If one dies, then death spreads. Some animals die like that. One sheep dies, then death spreads. Sheep do not have any awareness of "I," only of "we." If you see sheep walking, it is as if they are all joined together -- only one life moving. If one sheep dies then the others feel like dying; the inner feeling to die begins to spread.

So when the society was more conscious of the feeling of "we" and there was not much awareness of "I," the tirtha was more relevant. The utility of such a place will be lost as the awareness of "I" increases.

The final thing to be understood about the tirtha is the value pf symbolic acts. For example, someone comes to Jesus and confesses his sins. Jesus puts his hand on that person's head and says, "Go, all your sins are forgiven." Now how can Jesus, just by putting his hand on someone's head, forgive them? Who is Jesus to forgive anyone's sins? If a person has committed a murder, how can he be forgiven like this? In India it is said that no matter what sins may have been committed, if you take a bath in the Ganges you will be free from your sins. Someone who has committed theft, who has defrauded people, who has killed someone -- how can he become freed of his sins by bathing in the Ganges?

Here two things need to be understood. The sin is not the real event but the memory is real. It is not the sin, the act of sin, that clings to you, but just the memory of it. If you have killed someone, the memory of it will haunt you like a nightmare throughout your life. Those who know of inner things say that whether a murder is committed or not is just part of a drama and is not very important. Neither anybody dies nor can anyone be killed. But the memory of the sin weighs heavily on your chest like a stone. An act is committed and becomes lost in the infinite -- the act is being taken care of by the infinite. The reality is that all acts are done by the infinite; you are unnecessarily becoming disturbed. If you committed a theft it was done through you by the infinite. If you killed someone it was done by the infinite through you. You are unnecessarily standing in between with your memory of the act, and that memory is a burden on you.

Jesus says, "Repent, and I will take away your sins" -- and someone who trusts in Jesus returns unburdened and purified. In reality, Jesus does not free you from your sins but from the memory of your sins. The memory is the real thing. Jesus only removes that. Similarly, the Ganges does not free you from your sins, but can free you from the memory of them. If someone really trusts the Ganges and believes that if he bathes in it he will be free of all sins -- if his collective unconscious built up over thousands of years

reinforces this, and if the society in which he is living also confirms his strong belief -- then he will be. Bathing cannot make a person free from the sin as such, because the sin has already been committed -- nothing can be done to the theft that has been committed or the murder that has been committed; nothing can be done about that -- but when a person with such a belief emerges from the Ganges, his trust in its purity and power frees him from the feeling of guilt even though the bathing is only a symbolic act.

How long can Jesus live on earth? How many sinners can he meet? How many of them can repent? Time is very short, and what will happen when Jesus is not there? Hindus have found a more permanent arrangement, connecting confession with a river, not a person. The river goes on receiving confessions and forgiving people. The river is infinite, its flow is steady and permanent -- how long can Jesus live? He was barely able to work for three years, from the age of thirty to thirty-three. Within the span of three years, how many sinners can confess? How many sinners can reach him? On how many can he put his hand? So Hindu seers entrust this phenomenon to a river, not to a person.

If someone goes to a tirtha he will return free and unburdened; he will be free of the memory of his sin. It is the memory that is binding him and has become a bond. The shadow of the sin that follows you is the culprit. It is possible to be free from it, but there is one condition. The most important condition is that you have total faith -- faith in the idea that this has been happening for thousands of years.

There are a few tirthas that are eternal -- Kashi is one such. There has never been a time on earth when Kashi -- Varanasi -- was not a tirtha. It is man's oldest place of pilgrimage, so it has a greater value. So many people have been liberated, experienced peace and sacredness there, the sins of so many have been washed away there -- a long, long continuity, and so the suggestion that one can be freed of sin has gone deeper and deeper. That suggestion becomes faith to a simple mind, and if such trust is there, the holy place will become valuable; otherwise it is useless. Without your cooperation, a tirtha cannot help you. And you will be able to give your cooperation only if the holy place is very ancient and historical.

Hindus say that Kashi is not a part of this earth, but a place apart; the city of Shiva is separate and indestructible. Many towns will be built and will be destroyed, but Kashi will remain forever. Buddha went to Kashi, all the Jaina tirthankaras were born in Kashi, Shankaracharya also went to Kashi, Kabir went to Kashi: Kashi has seen tirthankaras, incarnations and saints, but all are no more. Not one of them remains, but Kashi does. The holiness of all these people, the benefit of their good work, all the achievements of their lives, their collective fragrance is absorbed by Kashi and it has acquired their life streams. This makes Kashi separate from the earth, at least metaphysically.

On this city's roads Buddha has walked, and in its lanes Kabir has given religious discourses. Now it has all become a story, a dream, but Kashi has assimilated everything within itself. If someone with absolute trust and faith enters this city, he can again see Buddha walking on its roads, he can see Tulsidas and Kabir.... If you approach Kashi like this then it is not just an ordinary city like Bombay or London, it will take on a unique spiritual form. Its consciousness is ancient and eternal. History may be lost, civilizations may be born and destroyed, may come and go, but Kashi keeps its inner life-flow continuous.

Walking on its roads, bathing near the banks of its river, the Ganges, and sitting in meditation in Kashi, you also become a part of its inner flow. To think that "I alone can

do everything," is dangerous. The divine in many forms can help. In temples and holy places that help can be sought; their whole arrangement is to provide help.

I have told you some things to explain the tirtha to you -- but that is not enough. There are many things connected with such places which can't be understood -- but they do happen. Such things cannot be intellectually clarified or made into mathematical formulas, but they do happen.

I will tell you of two or three things that happen.... If you sit somewhere alone in meditation, you are unlikely to feel aware of the presence of the few souls who may be around you. But in a tirtha, such an experience can be very powerful. It may become so deep sometimes that you feel your own presence less than that of the others.

For example, Kailash has been a holy place for Hindus as well as for Tibetan Buddhists. But Kailash is absolutely desolate, it has no houses and no human population -- no worshipers, no priests.... But whoever sits in meditation in Kailash will find it fully inhabited. From the moment you reach Kailash, if you are capable of going into meditation you will say that is inhabited by many souls, and wonderful ones too. But if you go there and cannot meditate, then Kailash is empty for you.

Researchers believe that there are no inhabitants on the moon. But those who have some experience of Kailash will not agree that that is true about the moon. The astronauts will not find any signs of habitation there, but it does not necessarily follow that there is no one there just because the astronauts don't find anyone.

In Jaina scriptures there are detailed descriptions of the gods residing on the moon; but since astronauts have reported that there is no life on the moon, the Jaina saints and sadhus are embarrassed. All they can say is that the astronauts have not reached the real moon; otherwise they will have to admit that their scriptures are wrong.

Recently, someone in Gujarat was telling me that a Jaina monk was collecting funds to prove that the astronauts have not reached the real moon. This can't be proven; astronauts have reached the real moon, but the difficulty is that Jaina scriptures say that certain gods live there -- it is written in their books. They themselves don't know, so the ordinary intelligence of the Jaina sadhu will say that the astronauts have not reached the real moon because to him the scriptures cannot be wrong. Some other Jaina saddhu claimed that the astronauts have actually arrived on some huge satellites which are situated near the moon, not the moon itself. All this is ridiculous, madness; but there are reasons behind this madness. There has been a Jaina belief, over twenty thousand years old, that there is life on the moon, but they don't know what kind of habitation. That life form is like that of Kailash or that of any other tirtha.

When you get down from a train at the Kashi station, you see the gross form of Kashi, made of mud and stone: any tourist can go there and return. But there is a spiritual form of Kashi which only those who are introspective will be able to reach -- those who can go deep into meditation. For them Kashi will be different, very beautiful, beyond the imagination, whereas the earthly Kashi is dirtier and more foul-smelling than any other city. That is only the visible Kashi. Some would say that the other Kashi, the beautiful one, exists only in the imagination of the poet -- but that Kashi is also there. The real Kashi is a great contact field for meditators. One who reaches through meditation, reaches the spiritual Kashi: on its remote banks he might come across people he could never have imagined meeting.

Just now I said that on Kailash there is some form of unearthly habitation. It is more or less certain that about five hundred Buddhist siddhas regularly stay there; five hundred individuals who are enlightened buddhas will always remain on Kailash. If one of them wants to go on some other mission, he will not go until some other buddha arrives to take his place. But a minimum of five hundred enlightened buddhas must always stay there to make Kailash a tirtha. Only when one reaches such a tirtha does one meet disembodied souls, but it is not possible to meet them unless there is some fixed physical location; otherwise where would you meet disembodied souls, which cannot be seen? So Kashi is a place where you can sit in meditation and enter that inner world to establish communication with such souls. A tirtha cannot be understood intellectually, because it has nothing to do with the intellect. The real tirtha is hidden somewhere near the physical indication of it.

Another important thing is that when an enlightened person gives up the physical body, his compassion compels him leave some physical signs behind to help those who had walked with him, who had practiced austerities and made a lot of effort to become enlightened but had not succeeded. For those some guiding indications and symbols should be left so if they need they can establish a connection with him. In this world, although physical bodies are lost, no soul ever is, so some process has to be established to make contact with unembodied souls.

Tirthas do the same work as is done by radars today: radars reach where the eyes cannot. Stars which cannot be seen with the eyes can be detected by radar. Now through the tirtha communication can be established between those who have left us, and with those from whom we have become separated. Tirthas were established by those who left for those who are still on the path -- for those who have not yet reached, for those who can still go astray. Those left behind may occasionally need to ask something, to know something, which may be absolutely necessary for further progress, and without which they may go astray. They don't know what their future is, they don't know the road ahead; so for needy seekers such as them special arrangements were created -- such as tirthas, temples, mantras, idols, and so on. They are all rituals, but still they are definite processes to be gone through.

If some primitive is brought into your house at night, and you want light, you get up from where you are, walk a few feet to the nearest all, flip a switch and there is light. The primitive will not think that there is any connecting wire between the switch and the bulb; he might even think that there is some trick, and that your getting up and going to the wall to flick a switch is just a ritual. The switching of the first button turns on the light, the second turns on the fan and the third one a radio. If he does not know about electricity he will think that you are performing some trick near the wall, some ritual.

But suppose that one day when you are not home, the electricity goes off, and that primitive person goes to the wall and turns the switch.... When he finds that there is no light and that neither the fan nor radio come on, he will think that he has made a mistake in the ritual -- that he did not take the right number of steps from the chair to the wall, or that he did not put the right foot down first, or that you were muttering some mantra while turning on the switch. He cannot understand or have any idea about what electricity is.

In relation to religion similar things happen. What we call religious rituals are outward, superficial actions observed by us. Those who know nothing of the inner

arrangements also go through the same actions. Sometimes, when something happens, we feel perhaps the rituals are helpful; at other times when nothing happens we feel earlier successes must have been accidental, because if the ritual is right it should always produce a result. So whatever we do not understand appears to be like a ritual from the outside. This happens even with those who are highly intellectual people -- because intellect is, in a way, childish, and an intellectual person is, in a sense, juvenile, because intellect cannot take you very deep.

Three hundred years ago when the gramophone was introduced into France, when a scientist announced he had invented the gramophone, the French academy of sciences convened to verify his claim. The scientist began the demonstration by putting on a record: the president of the Academy watched carefully for a while and then immediately got up and took hold of the inventor by the neck! He thought that the scientist was playing some trick with his throat; otherwise how could a voice come out from the machine? He pressed his neck even tighter, but the voice continued! The inventor never expected this from a scientist. He became frightened and asked the president what he was doing. The inventor said it was no trick, and asked the president to go out of the room with him; the voice of the gramophone could still be heard. All the other scientists present protested and said that there was some trick, that this was the work of the devil; otherwise how could a small disc start speaking? Today we can laugh at this because we know what a gramophone is; otherwise, we would have reacted in a similar way.

If one day an atom bomb explodes, destroying the whole of civilization except for a record-player which happens to be with an aboriginal tribesman.... If he puts on that record-player, any remaining population may kill him because he will not be able to explain how the record speaks. Even you may not be able to explain how a record "speaks."

It's interesting to note that all civilizations live through beliefs, faith. Only three or four people may know how the record-player works; the rest just have faith in its working. You switch on a button and there is light; you do it daily but can you explain how it happens? Only a few people know the secrets of its working; the remaining people only utilize the benefits of the discoveries. But when those secrets are lost, those who have just utilized their benefits will be at a loss; they will be afraid if one day the light bulb doesn't light up.

The tirtha and the temple have their own science, and that science has specific rules for the whole process. The second step follows the first, and the third follows the second; even if one step is missed, the result will not be the same.

It should also be understood that once a civilization is highly developed, when science is properly understood, the ritual and methodology becomes simplified, they don't remain complex. When technology isn't properly developed, the process remains very complicated. For example, what can be easier than flicking a switch to produce light? Would whoever invented electricity have lit his lamp so easily? What could be as easy and simple as my voice being recorded while I speak? We do not have to do much for it, but do you think that making the tape recorder was so easy? If someone asks me how speech is recorded on this tape machine, I will say that he has only to speak and his voice will be recorded. But it has taken a long time for the development of the tape recorder. Now the process is simplified, and because it is simplified the technology has reached the common man. The common man has only the final results in his hands.

Religion too is like this. When Mahavira is working on some religious principles, he stakes his life for it. But you know the evolved process very easily. It becomes as easy for you as pressing a button. But this is the real difficulty -- the inventor gets lost and only the button remains in your hand and you may not be able to explain how to activate the process or how it will work.

At the moment, scientists in America and Russia are very keen to evolve telepathic methods to communicate with their astronauts in space. The spaceship "Luna" got lost in space because its radio stopped working, so they are alert to the danger of relying too much on a machine in space. If radio contact is lost, the astronauts will be lost forever; we will not be able to re-establish contact with them. While in space, they may want to report their findings, but they will not be able to convey them to us, so some alternative method is needed so that even if the machine does not work, thoughts can be transmitted. So American and Russian scientists are very keen on developing telepathy.

America appointed a commission to collect knowledge that exists anywhere in the world related to telepathy. After three or four years this commission reported that telepathic communication is possible but that those who are able to use it are not able to explain how they do.

In the report there is an account of a certain tribe in America: in every village of that tribe there is a special kind of small tree, and through the help of the tree the tribe communicates messages from one village to the other. For example, if a man had gone to the nearby village to get some household requirements, if his wife suddenly remembers that she has forgotten to ask him to bring a particular article, she tells the tree to convey the message to her husband. In the evening when the husband arrives home, he has brought the article. The members of the commission watched this happening, and they were very puzzled.

When we talk with someone on the telephone, the primitive person is bound to be puzzled. We aren't, because we know the system. And when we listen to the radio there is nothing alarming about it for us because we know what it is. But we are certainly surprised when we are told that some people transmit messages through a tree.

The members of the commission stayed with that tribe for three or four days and set up their own experiments. They talked to the people of the village; no one was able to explain how the transmission of messages happened, they only said that it had always happened. They take care that it does not die -- a ritual is made of transplanting a branch of it. Their fathers and their forefathers have always used the tree to pass on messages but they did not know how it worked. The vital energy of the tree was being used for telepathy, but why that tree was used and how the telepathy works the tribal people do not know. The key is lost with the people who discovered it.

Buddhists do not allow the original bodhi tree -- the one under which Buddha became enlightened -- to die. Now you can understand why. When the original tree was withering, King Ashoka sent one of its branches to Sri Lanka. That branch became a tree and is still there. A branch of it was brought back to India and planted in Bodhgaya. The same tree has been kept in continuity. The Bodhgaya tirtha is valuable because of that tree.

When Buddha became enlightened the tree must have deeply absorbed something of Buddha's consciousness. It was an unprecedented and extraordinary event, the experience of enlightenment happening to Buddha. If lightning strikes a tree, the tree will be burned,

so it is not difficult to imagine that when the lightning of consciousness struck of Buddha, the tree too became enlightened in some way.

Buddha must have given some secret instruction not to allow the tree to die. He said, "Don't worship me -- it is enough to worship this tree." That is why for five hundred years after his enlightenment, idols of him were not made. The bodhi tree was the idol and it was worshiped. The pictures of Buddhist temples of those days is only of the Bodhi tree and the circular aura of Buddha in the middle, but no image of Buddha himself. That tree had its own experience of the event of enlightenment and became charged. Those who know use the tree to establish communication with Buddha.

So it is not the town of Bodhgaya, but the bodhi tree that is of value. Buddha had walked and lived under that tree for a long time before his enlightenment; his footprints have been preserved under it. When Buddha became tired in meditation, he would walk by that tree for hours on end. Buddha did not live with anyone as much as he did with that tree. He could not have lived with any human being with as much ease and innocence as he did with that tree. He slept under it, sat under it and walked around it; he must have talked to it. The whole life energy of that tree was filled with, saturated with, and charged by Buddha.

When King Ashoka sent his son Mahendra to Sri Lanka, Mahendra asked, "What shall I take with me as a present?" Ashoka replied that they had only one present, and that there could be no better present in this world than that of the bodhi tree, and that he could take a branch of it as a present. So that branch was taken to Sri Lanka. No other king in this world has ever given a branch of a tree as a present. Can such a thing be a present? But the whole of Sri Lanka was effected with the energy vibrating from the branch of that bodhi tree.

People said that Mahendra had made Sri Lanka Buddhist, but they were wrong. The conversion of Sri Lanka happened through the branch of the bodhi tree; that branch turned those people to Buddhism. Buddha had given a secret message that the branch should be sent to Sri Lanka, and that the right time and the right person to carry it should be waited for. When that right person arrived, the branch was sent.

Mahendra and Sanghamitra were Buddhist bhikkus and were living during buddha's time. The bodhi tree could not be sent to Sri Lanka through just anyone; only a person who had lived with Buddha, who had known Buddha, and who would not carry the branch simply as a branch of a tree but as a living buddha, could be entrusted with the job. One day, through some other person, it will have to be brought back to India.

The history behind this history is worth remembering. This is the secret history which travels behind the mundane history. The real history is that where the actual roots are; otherwise there is a network of events that happen on the surface. That is not the real history -- which is printed in newspapers and books.

If we ever become capable of focusing our sight on the real history, we will be able to understand the secrets of all these things.

Hidden Mysteries
Chapter #3
Chapter title: The Occult Science of the Third Eye
12 June 1971 pm in Woodlands, Bombay, India

Before I tell you about the vermillion or sandal paste mark, I would like to tell you about two events. It will make things easier for you to understand. Both of them are historical facts.

In the 1888 a person named Ramanujan was born in a poor Brahmin family in South India. He became a very famous mathematician. He could not study much, but still his genius in mathematics was unique. Many well educated mathematicians have earned a name because of their training and guidance from others for a number of years. But Ramanuja, was not even a matriculate and had no training or guidance from anyone.

With great difficulty he got a clerical job, but very soon news spread that he had an amazing talent in mathematics. Someone suggested that he write a letter to the famous mathematician, Professor Hardy, of Cambridge University -- he was the most eminent mathematician of those days. He didn't write a letter, but solved two theorems of geometry and sent them to Professor Hardy. Hardy was astonished to receive them and could not believe that someone so young could solve such theorems. He immediately wrote back to Ramanujan and invited him to England. When Hardy met him for the first time, he felt that he was like a child before Ramanujan in the field of mathematics. The genius and capabilities of Ramanujan were such that they could not be due to mental powers, because the intellect moves very slowly, thinking takes time, but Ramanujan didn't take any time in responding to Hardy's questions. No sooner was the problem written down on the blackboard or put to him verbally than Ramanujan began to reply, without any time gap for thinking. It was very difficult for great mathematicians to understand how it happened. A problem which would take about six hours for an eminent mathematician to solve -- and then too he was not sure about being right -- Ramanujan solved instantaneously, unerringly.

It proved that Ramanujan was not replying through the medium of the mind. He was not very learned, he had actually failed in matriculation; there was no other sign of intellectual ability, but in connection with mathematics he was superhuman. Something happened that was beyond the human mind. He died when he was thirty-six because of tuberculosis.

When he was in hospital, Hardy, along with two or three other mathematician friends, went to see him. As it happened, he parked his car in such a place so that Ramanujan could see its number plate. When Hardy went into Ramanujan's room, he told Hardy that his number plate was unique: it had four special aspects to it. After that, Ramanujan died. Hardy took six months to understand what Ramanujan meant, but he could only discover three of the four aspects. On his death he left a will that research work on that number should continue, to find out the fourth aspect. Because Ramanujan had said there was a fourth, there had to be. Twenty-two years after Hardy's death, the fourth was discovered. Ramanujan was right.

Whenever he began to look into any mathematical problem something began to happen in the middle space between his two eyebrows. Both his eyeballs turned upwards, centering on that middle space. In Yoga, that space is described as the third eye spot. It is called the third eye because if that eye becomes activated it is possible to see events and scenes of some different world in their entirety. It is like looking out of your house through a small hole in the door, and suddenly, when the door opens, you see the whole sky. There is a space between the two eyebrows where there is a small aperture which

sometimes opens -- as in the case of Ramanujan. His eyes rose to his third eye while solving a problem. Neither Hardy could understand this phenomenon nor would other Western mathematicians ever understand it in the future.

I will tell you about another event in connection with the vermillion mark, so that you will be able to understand its relationship to the third eye.

Edgar Cayce died in 1945. Forty years before that, in 1905, he fell sick, became unconscious and remained in a coma for three days. The doctors had lost all hope and said that they could not find any way to bring him back to consciousness. They thought that his unconsciousness was so deep that perhaps he would never come out of it. All medicines were tried, but there were no signs of his regaining consciousness.

On the evening of the third day, the doctors said that they could not do anything more and that within four to six hours he would die, or if he lived, he would be mad -- which would be worse than death -- because as time passed the delicate veins and cells of his brain were disintegrating. But Cayce suddenly started speaking even though he was in a coma. The doctors couldn't believe it: Cayce's body was unconscious, but he was speaking. He said that he had fallen from a tree, that his backbone was injured, and that was why he was unconscious. He also said that if he was not treated within six hours, his brain would be affected and he would die. He suggested some herbal medicine which he should be given to drink and said that he then should recover within twelve hours.

The names of the herbs which he requested were not likely to have been known to Edgar Cayce, and at first the doctors thought what he was saying was just part of his madness because the substances he had suggested were not known to cure a condition such as his. but because Cayce had specifically mentioned them they thought they should try them. Those substances were searched for, and given to Cayce: he fully recovered within twelve hours.

After he became conscious and when the incident was related to him, Cayce could not remember suggesting any such medicine; he neither knew the names of the medicines nor recognized them. But this event in Edgar Cayce's life was the beginning of a rare happening. Edgar Cayce became an expert in suggesting medicines for incurable diseases; he cured about thirty thousand people during his life. Whatever prescription he gave was always right; without exception, every patient who tried his medicine was cured. But Cayce himself was not able to explain it. He could only say that whenever he closed his eyes to look for some treatment, both his eyes turned upwards as if pulled towards the middle of his two eyebrows. His eyes became fixed there and he forgot everything; he only remembered that after a certain point he forgot everything about this life, and until that point, the treatment would not come to him. He suggested some wonderful remedies, two of which are worth understanding.

The Rothschilds were a very rich family in America. A woman from that family had been sick for a long time and no treatment had helped. Then she was brought to Edgar Cayce, and in his unconscious state he suggested a medicine. We have to call his state unconscious, but those who know about this mysterious happening would say he was fully conscious at that time. In fact, unconsciousness continues until our knowledge reaches the third eye.

Rothschild was a millionaire, so he could afford to search the whole of America for that medicine, but he couldn't find it. No one could even say whether such a medicine existed. Advertisements were placed in international newspapers requesting information

about the medicine. After almost three weeks a man from Sweden wrote, saying that there was no medicine of that name in existence, although twenty years earlier his father had patented a medicine of that name but never had it manufactured. He wrote that his father had died but he could send the formula. The medicine was then made up and given to the woman, who then recovered. How could Cayce have known of a drug that had not even been available on the market?

In another incident, he again suggested a particular medicine to someone; a search was made for it but it could not be found. A year later an advertisement appeared in a newspaper announcing the availability of that medicine. For that previous year it had been being tested in the laboratories; it had not even been given a name but Cayce knew of it. The medicine was given to the patient who soon recovered.

Cayce had suggested medicines which could not be found, and so the patients died. When he was told about this, he said that he was helpless, there was nothing he could do. He said, "I do not know who is seeing the patient and is speaking when I am unconscious -- I have no relationship with that person." But one thing was certain, whenever he was speaking in that state his eyes were drawn upwards.

When we are in deep sleep, then our eyes are drawn upwards in proportion to the depth of sleep. Now, psychologists are doing much experimentation on sleep. The deeper you are in sleep, the higher are your eyes; the lower the eyes, the greater is their movement. If your eyes are moving very rapidly under their eyelids you are having a very eventful dream. Now this has been scientifically proved by through experiments -- that "rapid eye movement, REM," indicates a fast-moving dream. The lower the eyes, the greater the REM; as the eyes go higher, the REM is reduced. When the REM is zero, sleep is at its deepest. Then the eyes remain steady between the two eyebrows.

Yoga says that in deep sleep we reach the same state that we reach in samadhi. The place where the eyes become fixed is the same in deep sleep and in samadhi.

I have told you about these two historical events only to indicate that between your two eyebrows there is a point where this worldly life ceases, and the life of the other world begins. That point is a door. On this side of the door this world flourishes, and inside it there is an unknown world, supernatural.

The tilak -- the vermillion mark -- was first devised as an indication and symbol of that unknown world. It cannot be applied just anywhere, and only a person who can place his hand on the forehead and find the spot can tell you where to apply the tilak. There is no use in putting the tilak just anywhere, because the spot is not in exactly the same place on everyone. The third eye is not found in the same place on everyone; it is somewhere above the middle of the two eyebrows on most people. If someone has meditated for a long time in his past lives and has had a small experience of samadhi, his third eye will be lower down. If no meditation has been done that place is higher up on the forehead. From the position of that spot, it can be determined what the state of your meditation was in your past life; it will indicate whether any state of samadhi happened to you in your past life. If it happened often, the spot would have come down lower; it would be at the same level as your eyes -- it can't go lower than that. If that spot has come in line with your eyes, then with just a small push one can enter samadhi. In fact the push can be irrelevant; so, many times when someone goes into samadhi without any apparent cause we are surprised.

There is a story about a Zen nun.... She was returning with a pot of water on her head after fetching water from a well. The pot somehow fell, and in that falling the woman achieved samadhi, became enlightened. The incident seems so insignificant: the pot falls and breaks -- and samadhi happens! There seems to be no logical connection.

There is another such event, this one in the life of Lao Tzu. He was sitting under a tree during autumn and the dry leaves of the tree were falling. Watching them, Lao Tzu became enlightened. There is no relationship between enlightenment and leaves falling, but such things happen when because of work done in past lives your spiritual journey is almost completed and the third-eye spot has moved down so that it is between your two eyes. Then any small happening will tip the scales, and that final small happening can be anything.

If the sandal paste mark or tilak is put just at the right spot, it indicates several things. Firstly, if your master has told you to put a tilak on a particular spot, you will begin to experience something there. You may not have thought about this, but if you sit with closed eyes and someone puts his finger on the spot between your two eyes, you will have the feeling that someone is pointing his finger at you. This is the experience of the third eye.

If the tilak is the same size as your third eye and it is put at just the right spot, you will remember that spot for twenty-four hours and forget the rest of the body. This remembering will make you more aware of the tilak and less of your body. Then a moment comes when nothing else is remembered about the body except that tilak. When that happens you will be able to open your third eye. In this practice connected with the tilak, in which you forget the body and just remember the tilak, your whole consciousness crystalizes and becomes focused on the third eye. It is just like focusing the rays of the sun on a piece of paper with the help of a lens; you create enough heat to burn the paper. When those sun rays are concentrated, fire is produced. When consciousness remains spread all over the whole body, it is just doing the work of carrying on your life. But when it becomes totally focused on the third eye, the barrier to seeing with the third eye is burnt, and the door which allows you to see the inner sky is opened.

So the first use of the tilak is to show you the right spot on the body so that you remember it twenty-four hours a day. Another use of the tilak is to make it easier for the master to see the spot without having to put his hand on your forehead to see your progress -- because as the place moves downwards, you will put the tilak a little lower. Each day you have to feel the spot and move the tilak to it, to where you feel the presence of the third eye.

The master may have thousands of disciples: while the disciple bows down to him, the master observes where his tilak is and does not need to ask anything about his progress. The tilak indicates whether the disciple is making progress or whether he is obstructed by something and has become stuck. If the disciple can't feel the downward movement of the spot, it means that his consciousness is not being totally focused. If the disciple has put the tilak on the wrong place, it means he is not conscious of the exact point.

As the spot goes on moving downwards, the methods of meditation will have to be changed. So for the master, the tilak functions just like a patient's progress chart in a hospital does for a doctor. The nurse goes on recording the temperature, blood pressure, pulse and so on; the doctor just has to see the chart to know the patient's condition.

Similarly, the tilak was a great experiment to indicate the condition of the disciple; the master had no need to ask anything. The master knew what help was needed or what needed to be changed. This was the value of the tilak -- judging the changes needed in meditation.

Another aspect of the third eye is that it is the center of willpower. In Yoga it is called the agya chakra. We call it that because whatsoever discipline we have in our life is governed by it; whatever order and harmony there is in our life arises from this point.

Let us understand it this way.... All of us have a sex center, and it is easier to understand through the sex center because we are all aware of it; we are not very aware of the agya chakra. All our desires in life are born in the sex center. As long as the sex center is not activated, there is no sexual desire. However, every child is born with the capacity for sex and the entire mechanism for fulfilling sexual desire.

It is a strange fact that women are born with all the ova they could need for the entire length of their reproductive life. Not a single new ovum can be produced later. From the first day of her life the number of ova a woman has indicates the potential number of children she can give birth to. After she reaches puberty, every month one ovum will be released from her ovaries. If it meets and unites with a sperm from a man's semen, a child is conceived. Then no more ova are released as long as that embryo develops and until after the newborn child is a few months old.

The desire for sex, however, does not arise until the sex center becomes active. As long as that center is inactive, even though the necessary equipment for sex is complete in the body, sexual desire is not aroused. When one reaches the age of thirteen or fourteen, that center becomes active. We know this center because we are not activating it but it becomes activated by nature. If the situation were otherwise, very few people would become aware of it. Have you ever wondered that if just a thought of sex passes through your mind, the whole reproductive system becomes active. The thought arises in the mind -- far away from the sex center, but the thought activates the sex center immediately. Every idea or thought about sex is sucked by the sex center towards it. Every thought is attracted towards its relative center, just as water flows to a lower level.

The third eye center is the center of willpower. Let us understand what its function is.

People whose agya chakra is not activated in this life will remain slaves in thousands of ways. Without this center there is no freedom. We know about political and economic freedom, but these freedoms are not real -- because a person who has no willpower, whose agya chakra is not activated, will always remain a slave in one way or another. He may become free from one slavery but will become a slave to something else. He does not have a center of will to make him an owner of anything, he does not have anything like will. He does not have the power to command himself; his body and senses command him. If his stomach says it is hungry, he is hungry. If his body says it is sick, he becomes sick. If his sex center says he needs sex, the sexual desire arises. If his body says it has become old, he becomes old. The body commands and he obeys.

But as soon as this center of willpower becomes active, the body stops giving orders and instead it starts to obey; the whole arrangement is reversed. If such a person asks his blood to stop flowing, it will; if he asks his heart to stop beating, it will. He can ask his pulse to stop throbbing and it will. Such a person becomes the master of his body, mind

and senses. But without the activation of the agya chakra, he cannot be. The more you remember this center, the more you become the master of yourself.

Many experiments have been done in Yoga to awaken this center. If a person tries to remember this center every now and then, there will be great results. If a tilak is put there, your attention is drawn there repeatedly. As soon as the tilak is put on, the spot becomes set apart from the rest of your body. That spot is very sensitive, and if the tilak is on the right spot you will have to remember it. It is possibly the most sensitive spot in the body.

There are methods for marking this sensitive spot. After hundreds of experiments, sandalwood paste was chosen. There is a sort of resonance between sandalwood paste and the sensitivity of the agya chakra and if applied on that spot the paste deepens its sensitivity. Not just any substance can be used; some other substances, in fact, can badly damage the sensitivity of that spot.

For example, women stick a plastic colored dot on their forehead, but tikas from the marketplace do not have any scientific basis. They have nothing to do with Yoga, and they cause harm to the sensitivity of the third eye. The question is whether a substance increases the sensitivity of the spot or decreases it. If it increases the sensitivity, it is good; otherwise, it is harmful. In this world even a small thing can make a difference; everything has its own separate effect. Keeping this in mind, some special things were found to be useful. If the agya chakra can become sensitive and be activated, it will bring about an increased integrity and dignity in you. You will begin to be more integrated, whole; everything inside you ceases to be separate and divided and you become whole.

There is a small difference between the use of the tika and the tilak. The tika was meant particularly for women. In women the agya chakra is very weak, it has to be because the woman's entire personality is created for surrender -- her beauty is in surrender. If her agya chakra becomes powerful, then surrendering will be difficult. Her agya chakra is weak, very weak compared to a man's. That is why a woman always needs someone's help in one form or another. She does not ordinarily venture to stand on her own but looks to a helping hand, someone's shoulder to lean on, someone to lead her. She likes someone to tell her to do something, and her willingness to follow makes her happy.

India is the only country in which an attempt has been made to activate the woman's agya chakra. This is only because it was felt that unless the agya chakra is activated, the woman will not be able to make any progress in spiritual life; she cannot make any progress in meditative practices without will power -- that has to be made stable and strong. But it is necessary to make her agya chakra strong in a different way, because if it is done in the usual way, the same way as for a man, it will reduce her femininity and she will begin to develop the qualities of a man.

So the tika was invariably and firmly associated with a woman's husband. This association was needed because if it was just applied independently, it would increase a woman's independence and make her self-sufficient. And the more independent she became, the more her delicateness, her beauty and flexibility would be destroyed. There is a tenderness and softness in her seeking help from others, but if she became independent she wouldn't be able to avoid become hard and rigid. So it was thought that to make her strong directly would damage her femininity, it would create problems in her being a mother; it would make it difficult for her to surrender. Hence an effort was made to connect her will with that of her husband. This was helpful in two ways. Her femininity would not be affected but her will center would still become activated.

Let us understand it this way: the agya chakra cannot go against the person who it is associated with. If it is connected with the will of a religious master, it cannot go against him. If it is connected with a woman's husband, she can never go against him either. If a tika is put on the right spot of a woman's forehead, with its deep association with her husband, she will be able to follow him, but she will be powerful against the rest of the world.

If you understand what hypnotism is, you will be able to understand this associative phenomenon. If a hypnotist hypnotizes someone, then the person hypnotized will be able to hear only the voice of the hypnotist. He will hear the quiet command of the hypnotist, but he will not hear any loud noises that may be created by the spectators. This is similar to what happens when an Indian woman wears a tika: it makes her deeply suggestible. She remains open only to her husband and closed to everyone else. This happens only because of this tika. She will hear anything her husband may quietly say to her but will not feel willing even to listen to any one else's loud command. Her agya chakra is connected with her husband.

This suggestibility, this mantra, is used in connection with the woman's tika. She will follow only him and surrender herself only to him. Towards the rest of the world she maintains her freedom and independence, but now there will be no problem for her femininity; her womanhood can be preserved, her feminine qualities are left undisturbed. So as soon as the husband dies the tika has to be removed because now she is not to follow anybody. People have no idea about the scientific approach regarding the tika; they think that she because a woman has become a widow, the tika is removed. But there was a reason for removing it. Now she will have to live like any man for the rest of her life; and the more independent she becomes, the better it will be. Even the slightest area of vulnerability which might cause her to follow someone has to be closed.

This tika experiment was very deep. But it has to be on the right spot and of the right material and put on correctly; otherwise, it is absurd. If the tika is only decorative it has no value. Then it is only a formality. So when the tika is applied for the first time, it is done with ceremony, with a fixed ritual. Only if it is done that way will it be beneficial and not otherwise.

Now all these things have become meaningless because now the entire chain of scientific thinking behind them is lost. Now this is only an empty ritual, an outer hollow shell that we are still just carrying somehow, without any purpose, without any love.

I will tell you a few more things about the agya chakra which will be useful. The line drawn upwards from the agya chakra divides the brain in two, right and left. The brain begins at that line, and lies an inch deep. It has been observed that half our brain is not utilized; the most intelligent people among us -- our geniuses -- also use barely half of the brain and the remaining half is unused and undeveloped. Scientists and the psychologists are puzzled as to why this is so. Even if that half of the brain is surgically removed, everything continues to function normally; the person will not even know that half of his brain has been removed. But scientists know that nature does not create anything unnecessarily. There could be a mistake with one person's brain, but not with the brains of the whole of humanity! But in all humans half of the brain is unused, inactive, without any movement whatsoever.

Yoga maintains that this half of the brain becomes active only after the agya chakra is activated. Half of the brain is connected with the centers below the agya chakra, and the other half is connected with the centers above the agya chakra. When the centers below the agya chakra are working, the left side of the brain is utilized. When the centers above it begin to work, the right side of the brain is activated. As long as there is no experience of the activities of that other half there can be no conception of it.

In Sweden a man fell from a train. When he was taken to the hospital, he began hearing the programs which were being broadcast on radio stations within a ten-mile radius around him. At first it was thought that there was some damage in his brain because he was describing the sound as just a humming in his ears. But after two weeks he began to hear the radio programs clearly, and he became very frightened and asked the doctor what was wrong. He told the doctor that he could hear the radio programs as clearly as if he had a radio receiver near his ears. The doctor asked him what he was hearing, and he repeated the line of a song; the doctor had just heard that particular song on the radio at his home where he had just come from. After that song, the radio transmission for that session had stopped and the doctor had left for the hospital. When transmission began again, a radio was brought into the hospital to compare what the patient heard with what was being transmitted. It was found that this man's ears were functioning like a radio receiver. Finally he had to be operated on; otherwise he would have gone mad because there was no way to switch off the programs. He could hear the broadcasts all the time, whether he wanted to or not.

This incident made one thing clear -- that the ear has a great potential. It may be possible by the turn of this century to use our ears to listen to broadcasts directly. The ear can work like a radio receiver just by providing an on-off switch fixed near the ear! This idea only came because of this man having a train accident. In this world, many new inventions have been made, new ideas and perspectives have arisen accidentally. We could never have thought on the basis of our past knowledge that some day our ears might act as radio receivers. Both the ear and the radio receiver do the work of hearing; both are receptive. In fact the radio was made after the ear, the ear served as a model; the radio is meaningful only because of our ears. The other potentialities of the ears cannot be known unless we suddenly or accidentally stumble on them.

A similar incident happened during the second world war. A man was wounded and became unconscious. When he became conscious, he began to see stars in the sky -- during the daytime. Stars are always there, but because of the radiance of the sun we are not able to see them during the day; they are very far away and the sunlight intervenes.

Stars are hundreds of times bigger than the sun and they are hundreds of times brighter than the sun, but they are farther away from the earth than the sun. Sun rays take about nine minutes to reach the earth, whereas the light from the nearest star takes four light years to reach the earth. The light from the sun travels at the speed of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second. Even at this speed sunlight takes nine minutes to reach earth -- and light from the nearest star takes four light years. There are stars so far away that their light might take four thousand years, four hundred thousand years, forty million years, or four billion years to reach the earth. Some scientists say that the light rays that began to travel from a distant star before the earth was born, may only reach here when the earth has disappeared. Those light rays may never know that there was something like earth that happened during their journey.

The stars that that wounded man saw exist during the day but they cannot be seen. But that man saw them! What happened to his eyes? They developed some extraordinary capacity; that incident revealed the potential of the eyes. It indicated that there is dormant potential in our eyes of which we are not aware -- all our senses have much dormant potential. Whatever seems like a miracle to us is only the sudden revelation of some of our ordinarily dormant potential. It is not a miracle. There are many miracles within us, but they are not manifest, they are hidden behind locked doors.

Just a few minutes ago I was telling you that half of the brain usually remains unused and becomes active only when the agya chakra becomes active. That is the insight of Yoga. Such insights have not just come to light from recent experience, but have been known for at least twenty thousand years. You cannot rely on any conclusion reached by science because what science believes to be true today may be proved wrong within six months. But these insights of Yoga are confirmed by the experience of at least twenty thousand years. We have the illusion that ours is the first civilization, but many human civilizations happened earlier and have vanished. Many times before us man reached the same or higher heights of scientific progress, but those civilizations were destroyed.

In 1924 a center for research in atomic science was established in Germany. Suddenly one morning, a person who gave his name as Falkaneli went to the institute and handed in a written message to the center authorities. In the letter he had written, "I and a few others know certain facts about atomic science, and on the basis of that knowledge, I warn you not to go ahead with your atomic research because before our civilization, many others destroyed themselves through explosive atomic energy. It is better to stop any further research." Afterwards efforts were made to find the writer but without success.

In 1940 there was a very great scientist in Germany, Heisenberg, who had worked developing atomic energy ares. Again, the same person, Falkaneli, came to his house, handed a note to his servant and then went away. The note contained the same message, and again the author could not be traced.

In 1945, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, all twelve scientists who had helped to make the atomic bomb were sent a similar letter by Falkaneli, telling them that even now it was not too late to stop further development of their work; otherwise, since the first step towards destruction had been taken, the last step was not far off. Oppenheimer, who was the greatest American nuclear scientist and who had contributed a great deal towards the making of the atomic bomb, immediately resigned from the nuclear board after receiving this letter and issued a statement saying, "We did wrong." But once more this Falkaneli could not be traced. What Falkaneli was saying is very possible: earlier civilizations did play with the atom and destroyed themselves.

In India at the time of the Mahabharata war, the bow was used with atomic arrowheads, and a great destruction followed. This is the situation: a child becomes a young man and commits the same mistakes which his father committed. The father, who is now old, warns him not to -- in his own time, his father had also warned him -- but in youth such mistakes are committed, and younger generations are warned by those who meanwhile have become old. Civilizations are also destroyed by taking the same steps

and making mistakes similar to those of past civilizations. Civilizations, too, pass through childhood and youth and then become old and die.

The insights of Yoga have been gained over a period of twenty thousand years; historically, the calculations for a period of twenty thousand years are fairly clear.If you want to study the youth of one man, you need to study that of ten, because what is true for one man may not be true for all men. The study of a single person and a single event are not conclusive enough by themselves. So that is why I said that the history of twelve thousand years is fairly clear.

Yoga has maintained for twenty thousand years that if you want to know what there is beyond this worldly life you have to activate that half of the brain which has been dormant and inactive. If you want to know anything about the absolute, that which is beyond matter, that other half of the brain will have to be activated. The door to that half of the brain is where we apply the tilak -- the place of the agya chakra. That spot is the outward location and it corresponds to the inner center, which is about one and a half inches deep inside the forehead. That deep point, that center, gives an insight which is beyond the world of matter and of desire.

Just as in India the tilak was devised, in Tibet they devised methods of actually surgically operating on that spot to reach the agya chakra. Tibetans have made a lot of effort to find the third eye, more than any other civilization. In fact all of Tibet's sciences and understanding about life in its various aspects is based on the understanding of the third eye.

Earlier I told you about Edgar Cayce who gave prescriptions while in a trance. He was the only such case in America, but in Tibet, people would ask for medical advice only from those who were able to go into a trance, samadhi. Tibetans tried to reach the agya chakra surgically, by breaking it open from the outside. But reaching that place surgically is quite different from reaching it internally, through Yoga practices as has been done in India. When the half brain is activated internally through Yoga practices, it is activated because of the development of consciousness. Opening the center from the outside -- without any refining or purifying of consciousness -- creates a danger of misusing the achievements of that half of the brain after it is activated, because the man remains the same. His consciousness is not transformed from within through meditation. What is needed is a change in consciousness through meditation.

If the half-mind is activated without that inner transformation, then the person who becomes capable of seeing beyond a wall, beyond outer earthly obstructions, may not try to save a person, for example, who has fallen into a well, but may want to dig out treasures which he can see -- through the activation of his half brain -- are lying hidden under the ground. If such a person knows that he can make people obey him, he might order you to do something that is wrong, to benefit himself.

External operations could have been done in India also, but Indians never attempted to do them, because the practitioners of Yoga know that if consciousness is not transformed from within, it is dangerous to activate such powers and put them in the hands of people who might misuse them. It is like giving a sword to a child. He may not only kill three or four people, he might also kill himself. So the transformation of the consciousness is necessary before new powers are activated.

In Tibet they tried to make a hole with physical instruments on the spot where we apply the tilak, so Tibetans came to know and experience many powers of the dormant

mind, but as far as spiritual discipline is concerned, Tibet could not become a great country. It is surprising that although Tibet did a great deal, it could not give birth to a buddha. It developed many powers, it came to know many unique things, but it used them for trivial matters.

India did not try to experiment with physical instruments, but tried to concentrate and focus the total energy on the agya chakra from within so that the third eye would open by the very force of that surging energy. It is a great discipline to bring the flow of consciousness up to the third eye; the mind has to be elevated to high levels of discipline. Normally, the mind gravitates downwards; in fact our mind normally flows towards the sex center. Whatever we may be doing -- earning money, increasing our status, anything -- in a subtle way, it is our desire for sex that is the motivating force. If we are earning money, it is only in the hope that we can buy sex. We seek higher positions only to be powerful enough to be able to select and secure sexual partners.

That is why in days past the reputation of a king was measured by the number of queens he had! And that is the right measure, because what is the value of your power? So, power and status and money are in a roundabout way only meant for the satisfaction of that fundamental sex drive. As long as your energies are flowing downwards towards the sex center it is possible that you will be spiritually undisciplined.

If you want to direct the energy to higher levels, then the direction of sex energy will have to be reversed. The complete direction of the flow has to be changed. You have to make an about turn, and shift your entire attention to an upward direction. There must be an upward vertical movement -- and this will be a great moral spiritual discipline. At every step there will be confrontation and a need for sacrifices. You will have to lose all that is inferior, lower, to gain that which is immense and sublime. This price has to be paid. And when you achieve higher powers at such a cost, how then can you misuse them? There is no question of misuse because the person capable of misusing any power will be finished before he reaches the goal.

It is because of this that in Tibet black magic was born -- because of those external operations. There was very little spiritual growth, but evil practices could thrive.

Among Sufis there is a story about Jesus.... In Christianity there is no mention of this anywhere -- there are many such stories about Jesus with the Sufis, stories which Christianity does not have. Even Moslems have accounts of some important events in the life of Jesus which are not found in Christianity. This story is recorded by the Sufis....

Jesus had three disciples who said to him that they had heard about his power to revive the dead. They did not want any salvation or the kingdom of God, but they wanted him to tell them the secret of raising the dead so that they could have that power. Jesus told them that they would never be able to use the mantra for themselves, because once they were dead, how could they use it? How would they benefit in making others come to life? He told them that instead he would show them how not to die at all, but the disciples said that they were not worried about their own deaths, that they were interested only in knowing how the dead could be made alive.

Finally Jesus became tired of them and he showed them the method. Immediately all three left him to search for a dead body somewhere, to try out the mantra before they forgot something or made some mistake. Unfortunately, in the first village they reached, they couldn't find a dead body, so they went to another one, and on the way they found a skeleton. As they could not find a dead body, they thought that they would try the mantra

on the skeleton. It was the skeleton of a lion. They used the mantra and immediately the lion came to life and killed them all!

Sufi say that only such can result -- the curiosity of an unethical mind can take one into great danger. So much secret knowledge was kept hidden so that it would not fall into the wrong hands. Anything given to an ordinary person was given in such a way that they would come to understand them only when they deserved to.

You may wonder why I have been telling you all this in relation to the tilak. A tilak was put on every child's forehead when he did not understand anything about it. But as he grew up and came to understand such things, the child would figure out the mystery of the tilak. Until then, just a hint about the right spot was given. Whenever the child's consciousness was capable, he could make use of that mark. It does not matter if out of one hundred people only one is able to use the tilak; that one is enough. If it only made one person aware of the tilak and the third-eye center, it had served its purpose.

There is so much value placed on the tilak that on all special occasions such as a marriage or a victory, the tilak is applied. Have you ever stop to wonder why the tilak is applied on every occasion of respect and honor? It is because of the law of association. Our mind is very interesting. It wants to forget the moments of misery and wants to remember the moments of happiness. That is why the mind forgets all events that brought unhappiness and remembers only the moments that gave happiness. That is why we always feel that the past was happy. An old man always thinks that he was happy in his childhood. It is because the mind drops all memories that are painful, and keeps those that are pleasurable. So when a person looks back to the past, he only sees happiness. In between, whatever unhappiness was there, is dropped.

No child ever says that his childhood is full of happiness. Children want to grow older fast -- old people say their childhood was full of happiness. There is some misunderstanding somewhere. If you ask a child what he would like to become, he will say he wants to grow up. If you ask old people what they want, they will say they want to be children again. The child always tries to look grown-up and tries to become older. He begins to smoke cigarettes only because he feels that smoking is a symbol of being grown up. Psychologists say that seventy percent of children begin smoking because it is a symbol of prestige. They think only big, strong, successful people smoke. So when a child smokes, he holds himself straight and he feels he is somebody -- not just an ordinary person.

If a film is declared "For adults only," boys will put on artificial moustaches to try and get into the show. Why? There is a burning desire in children to grow up quickly. But old people say that childhood was very happy. Why? The only reason is that the mind makes us forget the unhappy times; unhappiness is not worth remembering.

One psychologist, Piaget, after experimenting with children for forty years, has found that the memory of the first five years of life is very poor, almost nil -- because those years are so unhappy that the child does not want to remember them. If you try to remember events of your early life, according to Piaget you will remember back to when you were five years old, or at the most four years old. Was there no memory formation before then? There was. Were there no events before you were five years old? There were. In those early days did no one abuse you? Did someone not love you? All these things happened. But then why is there no memory of those first four or five years?

Piaget says that early childhood days were full of unhappiness for the child; the child feels weak, helpless, and so dependent that he suppresses the memory of them, he simply drops those days from his memory. If asked about them, he simply says, "I don't remember anything before the age of four." ... Because when his father told him to get up he had to obey; if his mother told him to sit down he had to obey. Everyone around him was more powerful and he couldn't go against them -- he was as helpless as a dry leaf in the wind. He had to do whatever he was told; he was dependent on others for everything. Just the hint of anger in the other's eye and he was frightened.

So he just closes up and forgets that he had any life before he was four years old. But if he is hypnotized, and asked to remember events from before he was four, or even when he was in his mother's womb, he will remember and describe them. If during the pregnancy his mother fell over, under the influence of a hypnotist the child can remember the shock it felt in her womb. But usually such memories cannot be recalled in ordinary consciousness.

There was a strong reason to associate the tilak with one's moments of happiness. Whenever there is a happy event, let a tilak be put on your forehead. Both the happy event and the tilak will be remembered through association. Here it is necessary to know a little about the law of association.

Pavlov, the Russian scientist, did many experiments in this area. He said anything can be associated with anything else -- our lives are just the sum total of our associations. One of his experiments is well known. It involved him offering food to a dog. Pavlov would keep some food at some distance so that the dog would start salivating while he was looking at the food. Then Pavlov rang bell. There is no connection between a bell and the secretion of saliva, but whenever the food was offered to the dog the secretion of saliva began and then the bell was rung. This was done for fifteen days; the mental association between the bell and the saliva was now established. On the sixteenth day there was no food, but when the bell was rung the dog began to salivate. The ringing of the bell activated the dog's memory of the food: the bell became a symbol for the food.

This same law of association has been used with the tilak: it has become associated with happiness. Whenever a happy event occurred, a tilak was used; so the tilak and happiness gradually became so associated that the tilak could never be forgotten. So whenever you become happy, you will first remember the agya chakra. We always like to remember happy moments, and whether we were really happy or not, we live in happy memories. Even small happinesses are exaggerated; we magnify the happy events and minimize the unhappy ones.

When you first met your beloved, how happy you were! Today when you think about it, it was such a great event. But if you actually meet her today, the happiness will become contracted. Then again within twenty-four hours you will magnify it. There is so much unhappiness in life that if we don't magnify the happiness it would be difficult to live.

If the tilak is associated with happiness, as the happiness is magnified, so also is the tilak. With this happening frequently the happiness is associated with the agya chakra. When this happens, understand that you have made use of happiness for opening the third eye. We can use this stream of happiness to activate the agya chakra. The more we activate it from different directions, the more helpful it is.

Those countries which have not used the tilak have not known what the third eye is. Countries which had even a slight inkling of the third eye have made use of the tilak. Those countries which had no concept of the third eye could not invent the tilak; there was no basis for it. Some society will not suddenly get the idea to start applying a tilak to the forehead without any reason. There is no reason to apply a tilak just at random on any spot. So it is not just accidental, and such a practice can survive only if there is a deep reason for it.

I will tell you a few more things about this third-eye spot. You may have noticed that whenever you are anxious there is a pressure on your third eye. Because of that your forehead contracts and wrinkles are formed. the tension builds up just on the spot where the tilak is placed. Those who are continuously tense and constantly thinking and reflecting, invariably indicate the location of the spot by the pressure which they feel on their forehead.

People who have worked hard on the third eye in their past lives have, at the time of birth, a sort of tilak on the forehead right at the third-eye spot. That spot appears slightly worn, just as if a tilak had been there. If you touch that spot on the forehead with your finger it will feel a little swollen -- just there, where in past lives a tilak was worn. Behind a tilak or tika is hidden the third eye.

There was a small experiment carried out by hypnotists.... Charcot, in France, was a great psychologist who worked on the subject of influencing a person by focusing his eyes on the other's forehead. If you try to concentrate your gaze on someone's forehead, he will become very angry and won't let you continue. It is thought ill-mannered and rude to do so. From the forehead the agya chakra is about one and a half inches inside -- very close to the surface. If someone is walking in front of you, and you fix your eyes on the back of his head, approximately at the level of his third-eye spot, you will find that within a few seconds that person will turn to look around behind him. If you continue this experiment for a few days, and after that if you mentally give him some suggestions, he will carry them out.

Try to understand: if you focus your gaze at the back of his head for a few seconds without even once letting your eyelids close, the person will look behind him. Then, just at that moment, you can mentally command him to do something. If you ask him to turn left he will do so, although he will feel very embarrassed; he may have been wanting to turn right. If you do this experiment for some time, you will be surprised at the results. From the back the distance to the third-eye spot is longer, but from the front the distance is only one and a half inches. From the front the results are more surprising....

Those who experiment in shaktipat, transmitting energy, are able to do so through the agya chakra. If some saint or sadhu makes you sit in front of him with your eyes closed, you might think that he is doing something -- he is only fixing his eyes on this spot on your forehead and mentally giving you a suggestion. If he says, "There is bright light within you," you will feel that there is light inside you. But that light does not remain with you; as soon as you are away from him it vanishes. Sometimes that illusion of light may persist for two or three days, and then it dies out. It is not really shaktipat, but only a small experiment on your agya chakra. The third eye is a unique gift, and there are innumerable uses of it.

When Christian missionaries came to southern India for the first time, some of them began applying the tilak to their foreheads. Because of this, about a thousand years ago a

situation arose in the Vatican court in which an explanation was demanded from these missionaries in India. Some of them had begun to wear the sacred thread, some had applied the tilak, and some even wore wooden slippers on their feet: they had begun to live like Hindu sannyasins.

The Vatican court felt that those missionaries were doing something wrong. Those missionaries who had begun to live in this way in India replied that they were not becoming Hindus by applying the tilak, but that by doing so they had come to know a secret. By wearing wooden slippers on their feet they had not become Hindus, but they had come to know that if they wore wooden slippers while meditating, the energy doesn't get discharged and so results that would have taken months without the wooden slippers, came about within a few days. They also said that if Hindus have come to know certain secrets, Christian missionaries would only be fools not to learn them.

Certainly the Hindus know many things -- it would be really surprising if they didn't, having been on a religious quest for twenty thousand years. For twenty thousand years all their most intelligent and wisest men have devoted their lives to the same end -- to the search for truth. They were possessed with only one desire: to know the truth that is hidden behind this existence, to see that which is invisible, and to encounter that which is formless. It would be really amazing if such people didn't know anything, after having single-mindedly dedicated all their intelligence to this single quest, and that too for twenty thousand years continuously. It is only natural that they would know -- and they do! But during the last two hundred years, certain things happened which are very disturbing.

It is worth understanding. In this country there have been hundreds of foreign invasions, but no invader could ever attack the vital core. Some invaders looked for wealth, some occupied land, others captured palaces and forts, but none could attack the interiority of India -- the attention of invaders was not drawn towards it. But then, for the first time, attacks were made of its interiority by Western civilization. The easiest way to attack it was to disconnect the country from its long history, and to destroy the past. A gap was created between the people and their history. In this way people became uprooted and powerless.

If today Western civilization were to be destroyed, there would be no need to destroy its buildings, its cinemas, its theaters or its hotels. If just the five most famous universities were destroyed, the whole Western culture would disappear. Western culture does not reside in its cinemas, hotels or night clubs -- it makes no difference if they continue -- but if the most eminent universities were destroyed, Western civilization would slowly die and become lost. The real basis of all cultures is its sources of knowledge. The roots of a civilization are in its long chain of knowledge. If the history of just two generations is taken away, a country will become cut off from all possibilities of further progress.

That is the difference between a man and an animal. Animals are not able to make progress because they do not have any schools. They do not have any way to transfer knowledge from the older generation to the new generation. At its birth an animal begins life right from where its father began, and its offspring will do the same. The human being, through education, can help his child's life to begin from where he left off. So there is a continuity of knowledge. All human progress depends on the transfer of accumulated knowledge from generation to generation.

Just imagine if for twenty years all adults decided not to teach anything to their children. The loss wouldn't just be of twenty years' of knowledge but all the knowledge which has been collected over twenty thousand years could become lost. And such a loss could not be made up in twenty years, it would need twenty thousand years to make up the gap, because a discontinuity would have been created in the accumulation of knowledge.

In this way, these two hundred years of British dominance in India created a great gap. Most of its links with the ancient knowledge and wisdom were broken, and its identity was established with a totally new civilization and culture with which its older civilization had no relationship. Indians think that theirs is a very old civilization, but they are mistaken; they are only a two hundred year old community. The British are now a far older community than the Indians. Whatever knowledge India has is just rubbish, and that too is just left-overs. That which the West chooses to give India is now its knowledge. Whatever India knew before two hundred years ago was lost in one stroke.

When the threads of a branch of knowledge are lost people just seem like ignorant fools. If you go out now with a tika on your forehead, and someone asks you why you are wearing it, you will feel ashamed because you have no answer. You can only say, "No reason. My father insisted on my doing it, and so I had to. What to do? Certain things have to be put up with." So these days, applying a tika cheerfully is difficult, if not impossible. Of course, a simpleton can do it -- he has no fear of others. But he is doing it not because he knows its purpose but because he has been told to.

When the links of real knowledge are broken, the outward symbols of it become difficult to carry. Then a certain tragedy results: those with intelligence keep away. And a thing remains meaningful only as long as intelligent people are involved in it. So it is interesting to note that whenever such a misfortune overwhelms a civilization, whenever it loses its connection with past knowledge, the intellectuals drift away from it because they don't like to look foolish. The illiterate try to preserve the symbols and follow the rituals, and so the symbols and rituals will continue for some time and then die a natural death.

But sometimes it happens that some valuable things are preserved by illiterate and backward people. Those who claim to understand run away at the first opportunity. In this life there are many mysterious roles that people play. If India wants to restore its broken links with its past, then people will have to look at every ritual that is being performed by the so-called ignorant and illiterate people. What they are doing is not without reason. Their outward symbols are linked with a past of twenty thousand years. They may not be able to explain why they are doing certain things, but there is no need to frown upon them. Some day we may have to thank them for at least having saved the symbols of that knowledge -- symbols on which research can be done.

So in India today what those illiterate people are doing needs to be reconnected with the knowledge we had prior to two hundred years ago. Only by doing that can we revive and give new life to the deep understanding that has grown over a period of twenty thousand years. Then we will be surprised at how foolish we have been in busily committing suicide.

Hidden Mysteries

Chapter #4

Chapter title: The Transformative Power of Idol Worship, Mantras, Music and Dance
16 June 1971 pm in Woodlands, Bombay, India

Dr. Frank Rudolf spent his whole life with some primitive tribes of the Amazon doing research on a very strange phenomenon. I would like to tell you about it so that you can understand more easily what idol worship was meant for. Most primitive communities have known for a long time of a particular process. Rudolf studied this and reached surprising conclusions.

Certain primitive tribes believe that it is possible to make a person suffer from a particular disease through a look-alike clay idol which represents him. They believe that even death can be brought about in this way. For thirty years Dr. Rudolf tried to find out how it is possible to transmit disease and death through an earthen representation of someone. Rudolf approached the subject skeptically and scientifically, and hundreds of times he actually saw with his own eyes disease and death being transmitted, even if a person was a thousand miles away.

His long study convinced him of the truth of such happenings. There were three things which he came to know after experimenting on himself. Firstly, it was not necessary for the clay idol to exactly resemble the person in whom disease or death was to be invoked. It is difficult even for an expert sculptor to make a clay idol which is exactly like a particular person, but it is not necessary; what is important is to establish mentally the shape and form of the person on the earthen representation. And there is a method for doing this.... If the idol-maker closes his eyes and remembers the person and mentally imposes his will on the idol, the idol will become symbolic and active.

I have already told you about the tilak and that the third eye, which is between the two eyebrows, has been found through the science of Yoga to have great power stored in it -- it is a great transmission center. If you ask your son or a servant to do something, and you feel they may refuse, you can do a small experiment. If you concentrate your energy on the center between your two eyes and tell them what you want them to do, nine times out of ten they will do it. But if you ask them without concentrating your energy that way, nine times out of ten they will not. Any idea or thought conveyed with the energy concentrated between the two eyes moves rapidly and carries with it great power.

If you concentrate on the image of a person with the energy of the agya chakra, and if that thought is then directed at the idol, it no longer remains mere clay. That mass of clay becomes energized by your concentrated will. If you mentally infuse some disease into that idol for one minute, the person who the clay idol represents will catch that disease. Howsoever far away that person may be from you, he will be affected; he may even die.

Rudolf wrote that what seemed unbelievable actually happened during his experiments. Before his very eyes he saw some tribesmen compel a tree, through an earthen replica of it, to dry up and wither. The tree, which had been lush, green and healthy, withered, and its leaves became dry. In spite of being watered, within a month the tree became diseased and died. What happened to a tree could happen to a person.

I am talking about these findings of Rudolf because idol worship is a similar experiment but on a large scale. If we can transmit disease or death to a person there is no

reason why we cannot establish or re-establish a relationship with those who are dead. It is possible that we can take a jump from the idol into that which is all-pervading and unmanifest.

The whole basis of idol worship is the relationship between your mind and the cosmic mind. What is needed is just a bridge between the two, and that bridge can be made. The idol is an attempt to create that bridge. Only something which is manifest, like the form of an idol, can become the bridge -- because it is not possible for you to establish a direct link with the formless.

Howsoever much one may talk about the formless and the unmanifest, it is mere talk and doesn't convey anything to you. Whatever experiences your mind has are all experiences of some form and shape; you have no experience of the formless, and words cannot convey anything about that which hasn't been experienced. You will go on talking about the formless and continue to live with the form. So if you want to establish a relationship with the formless, you have to make something which on one side has a form and on the other is formless. That is the secret of the idol.

Let me explain this another way. From our side we need a bridge which has a tangible form, but which also has a formless part: at our end it is manifest, and at the farther end, as it approaches the divine, it becomes unmanifest. If the idol remains just an idol, it cannot act as a bridge; if it is absolutely formless, then too it cannot become a bridge. The idol has to serve two purposes: it has to be visible on our side and dissolve into the formless on the other.

If I tell you that the term "idol worship" is wrong, you will be surprised; but actually it is absolutely wrong. It is wrong because for one who knows how to worship, the idol doesn't remain an idol. And the one who sees only the idol does not know what worship is or how to worship. We are using two words; one is idol and the other is worship. These two concepts cannot be experienced by the same person simultaneously. The word idol is for those who have never worshiped, and the word worship belongs to those who have never seen an idol.

Put differently, we can say that worship is the art of making the idol disappear. It is the art of slowly dropping the manifest and entering into the unmanifest. The manifest form gradually dissolves into the unmanifest, and as the worship deepens only the unmanifest remains. So "idol worship" is self-contradictory. Hence someone who is worshiping is puzzled as to where the idol is, and the one who has not worshiped at all wonders what a stone idol can do. These two types of people have two different types of experiences -- and between them there is no common ground.

When you go to a temple you see only an idol, because you are not able to see the worship itself. In a temple a Meera can be found totally absorbed in her worship. For her there is no idol. As soon as real worship deepens, the idol dissolves. We see idols because we do not know what worship is. As there is less and less worship in this world, we shall see more and more idols. When there are many idols, worship will as good as disappear. In that case, the idols will have to be pulled down, because what use will they be? They will be irrelevant.

Ordinarily, we think that the more primitive a man is, the more he is likely to be an idol-worshiper, and that as man becomes more intelligent he will drop his idols. But this is not true. In reality, worship has its own science, and the more ignorant we become about it the more mysterious it seems to us.

In this connection it will be helpful to tell you one more thing. Our belief that man has made progress in all directions, that he has evolved fully, is absolutely wrong. The life of man is so vast that if he makes great progress in one direction, he does not realize how far he has remained behind in another direction. If science has made great progress, we have fallen far behind in the matter of religion. Whenever religion flourishes, science lags behind. When we grow in one dimension, the other dimensions are completely forgotten.

In Europe in 1880 the caves of Altamira were discovered. In those caves there are colored pictures said to have been drawn twenty thousand years ago. But the colors of the pictures look as fresh as if they were painted yesterday. Because of this, Don Marcellano, who discovered these caves, was criticized all over Europe. Everyone thought that he had touched up the pictures. All the artists who saw the pictures said Marcellano was trying to fool the public, that such fresh colors could not be ancient.

What they were saying was right, in a way, because the paintings of Van Gogh, which are not even one hundred years old, are already fading; the pictures Picasso painted in his youth have become as old as he himself. The colors used these days by artists throughout the world don't last more than a hundred years; they are bound to fade within a century.

But when the investigation of the caves Marcellano found was completed, it was proved beyond doubt that the caves were more than twenty thousand years old. This is a great mystery, because those who painted those colors seem to have known much more about colors than we know at present. We may have been able to reach the moon, but we have not been able to make colors that can remain fresh and last longer than a hundred years. Those who made these colors twenty thousand years ago knew much more about the science of color than we do.

The mummies of Egypt are ten thousand years old. They are the dead bodies of human beings, but they have been so well preserved -- as if they had died just yesterday. We have not been able to discover the chemical preservatives that may have been used. How could these bodies have been protected for ten thousand years? -- there is no deterioration at all. But we have not been able to establish which chemicals were used to preserve them.

The huge stones on top of the pyramids could not have been placed there by any crane that we may possess today. It seems beyond the power of man to have put them there, but it is very unlikely that the people of that time had cranes. They must have known some technique, which we cannot even guess at, to lift those rocks.

The truths of life are multidimensional. The same work can be done by many different methods and many different techniques. Life is so vast that when we begin to work in one dimension, we forget all the other dimensions.

Idols were created by very highly developed people. This is worth thinking about. An idol is a bridge connecting us with the cosmic force which surrounds us, so those who developed the idol made a bridge for understanding the ultimate mystery of life.

We say that we have discovered electricity. Certainly we are more advanced and civilized than earlier communities that knew nothing about electricity. We have discovered radio waves, and we can send a message from one country to another within a second, so we are definitely more advanced than people who depend only on the power of their own voice to communicate, just a few hundred feet away, by shouting.

But compared to those able to make a bridge to contact the supreme source of life, we are just children. Our electricity, our radio and similar discoveries are just toys. The art of being connected with the ultimate mystery of life was discovered by those who had worked very hard in that one direction.

As I told you earlier, one aspect of the idol faces man, and a window opens out from that form towards the formless. The window of a house must have a shape and form, just as the house does; the window cannot be formless. But when you open the window and look at the sky, you enter the formless. If I say to someone who has never opened his window to see the sky that by opening the window of my house I am able to see the formless, he will say I am mad. How can one see the infinite from a small window? -- at the most whatever can be seen from a window can only be as big as the window itself. He is perfectly logical, and if he has never seen the sky through the window it will difficult to convince him that even a small window can open up onto the infinite. The window cannot set a limitation on that onto which it opens, nor can the idol set a limitation on the formless.

Those who think an idol is an obstacle in understanding the unmanifest make a great mistake. And those who think that by breaking a window the sky can be broken are mad! By destroying an idol the unmanifest cannot be disturbed. But those who do not know the art and alchemy of worship may think of destroying idols.

Worship is such an inner, subjective, personal matter that it cannot be expressed or demonstrated. Anything inner and personal in life cannot be demonstrated. If my heart is cut open you will not be able to see love in it; nor will you find anger, hate, forgiveness or compassion. You will find only a sort of pump for the circulation of blood. If after putting me on the operating table and investigating my heart, a surgeon certifies that I have never experienced any love or hate, I have no way of proving him wrong. Will the surgeon confirm my claim that I have loved? He may say that I am deluded. But if I ask the doctor whether he has had any experience of love and hate, if he is logical and honest he will say that he also has had such delusions; otherwise, the heart as seen on the operating table is only a pump-like object for the circulation of blood and there is nothing like a heart that feels love or hate.

If your eyes are operated on and examined, it will not be possible to prove that they have seen dreams. How can you know from an eye kept open on an operating table that at night, while closed, it has seen many dreams? We all see dreams, but where do they exist? Dreams may be unreal, but their existence cannot be denied. However unreal a dream might be, it happened somewhere within. If it was a frightening dream, when you wake up your heart is beating faster; even if it was unreal, if you cried during your dream, when you wake your eyes will be wet. Something has happened internally but the outer, the physical eyes, do not reveal anything: whatever is inner, subjective and personal cannot be seen outwardly.

An idol can be seen -- as can the heart or the eye. But worship cannot be seen. Worship is like love or a dream; hence when you pass a temple, you can see the idol but not the worship. So if you saw Meera dancing before an idol, you would think she was mad, naturally, because her worship cannot be seen. She seems to just be dancing in front of a stone!

When Ramakrishna was appointed to be the priest in the Dakshineshwar temple in Calcutta, after a few days people began to complain about him. It was said that before

offering flowers to the deity, Ramakrishna first smelled them, that before offering the deity food, he himself tasted it! This was thought to be a sacrilege.

Ramakrishna was summoned before the temple committee and asked for an explanation. He said that whenever his mother had fed him, first she would test the food to decide whether it was tasty enough for him, she would decide first whether it was worth giving to him; so he was doing the same with the deity. How could he offer food that he had not tasted? How could he offer flowers that he had not smelt? The committee said this went against all the rules of worship.

Ramakrishna asked, "Can there be any rules for worship? Can there be any rules for love?" Where there are regulations, worship dies. Where there are regulations, love dies. Love is an outpouring of inner feelings which are very personal and individual. There is a universal truth in this which can be recognized. When two lovers love, though they are both loving, they love in their own individual way. The manifestations may be entirely different, but there is a similarity of experience. In both of them, within their love the same soul resides.

I was telling you that though the idol can be seen, worship can't be, but still we have made the word, "idol worship," which is absolutely wrong. Worship is the method of obliterating the idol. First the devotee makes the idol and then he makes it disappear. In an earthly sense he makes the idol, and in a spiritual sense he destroys it. He makes it from mud and then lets it dissolve into the supreme existence.

I will now tell you about one more aspect.... In this country for thousands of years we have made idols and then immersed them in water. Many people feel it is strange and they have asked me why beautiful idols are made of the goddess Kali and then after a few days just thrown into the water. Why is the god Ganesha decorated ceremoniously and worshiped lovingly for a few days, and then immersed in water? -- either thrown into the sea or a river or a lake. This is mad! But there is a beautiful concept behind this immersion.

The real secret of worship is in making an idol and then letting it disappear... giving a shape and form to the idol and then letting it vanish into the formless. It is all symbolic -- the act of making an idol of the goddess Kali, worshiping it, and then immersing it in water. But we don't worship in the right way: we have made the idol, decorated it beautifully and looked after it, so then we are reluctant to let it go by immersing it. If we had really worshiped, worshiped in the deepest sense, then the idol would have disappeared inside us, crystallized inside us, long before we let it disappear into the water. If the real worship had happened then there would have been no need to immerse the idol at all, it might have remained where it was but the heart of the worshiper would have been immersed into existence, into the divine. Then, if we had gone to immerse the idol it would have been like throwing away a used cartridge; it would have done its work.

But the idol which we immerse is a loaded cartridge -- unused and still alive. We have just loaded the cartridge and we have to immediately throw it away, so naturally we are unhappy about it. In earlier times, during the twenty one days of worship, the cartridge was fired, it had served its purpose; during that time the immersion or disappearance of the idol had happened.

Worship is immersion.

You begin your journey from the idol, which is in front of you. Worship is the process by which you proceed. As you go ahead the idol is left behind, and only worship

remains. If you stop at the idol you do not know what worship is. Whoever continues on to worship has recognized the idol, has known the root of worship and the real purpose of the idol.

In worship, what are the fundamental principles involved behind an idol? Firstly, to jump into that ultimate truth for which you are searching, you need some solid land, a jumping board. The ultimate truth does not need any solid ground, but you need a place from where to set out, from where you can take a jump. You have set out to jump into the sea, and the sea is infinite; you will need a bank or coastline from where you can take the jump. Once you jump you will be away from the shore, but won't you turn back to thank the seashore from where you jumped into the infinite?

This seems impossible. Can you jump from form to formlessness? The form will only take you to another form. If you ask Krishnamurti he will it is not possible. How can you jump from the form to the formless? How can you jump from the word to the wordless?

All jumps are from form to formlessness, because in a deeper sense, form is the opposite of formlessness. Form is a part of formlessness, and an indivisible part. It may seem separate to us -- because of our limited vision. In fact form and formlessness are indivisible.

When we stand on the seashore and look at the sea, we feel that they are separate, and that this shore and the opposite shore, far across the sea, are also separate. But if we go deep underneath the water, we will see that this shore and the opposite are connected at the bottom of the sea.

If we think in the language of scientists, there is a very interesting fact. All along the bottom of the sea there is a lot of mud or sand: if we dig into the sea we will find sand; if we dig into the land we will find water. If we express it in scientific terms, we can say that in the sea there is more water and less mud, and on the land there is more mud and less water. The difference is only in their proportions, in degrees, but they are not actually separate; everything is one and united.

Whatever we describe as having form is united with the formless, and the formless is also united with form. We are standing in the form; the concept of the idol accepts the fact that we are standing in the form. That is the situation, that is where we are, and we can only begin our journey from where we are, not from where we have to reach. Many philosophies begin from where we should be ultimately, but how is it possible to begin the journey from where we are not? The journey has to begin from where we are.

Where are we? We are living in form. All our experiences belong to form, to the manifest. We have not known anything that is not manifest, that does not have form. If we have loved, we have loved a form; if we have hated, we have hated a form. We are attracted by form and we are attracted to a form; we have practiced detachment from form. Our friends and enemies are all in form. Whatsoever we do is done with form.

The idol concept accepts this fact, so if we have to set out on our journey to the formless, we will have to give the formless some form. Of course, that form will be according to our own imagination.

One person experiences the formless in Mahavira, someone else in Krishna, and still another in Jesus. Whosoever has seen the formless in Jesus by looking into his eyes has found a door through which the formless can be seen. Whosoever held Jesus' hand found

that it ceased to be the his hand and became the hand of the infinite. Whosoever heard Jesus' words and felt his heart vibrate, not in response to the words but to what was beyond those words, found it very easy to jump into the infinite through worshiping the image of Jesus.

Someone found the formless in Krishna; someone found it in Buddha and someone else in Mahavira. But remember that at first we will only be able to see the formless, the infinite through some form. Pure formlessness can't be seen directly by anyone. We don't have the capacity nor fitness to see it directly; the formless has to come to us bound in a form.

This is the meaning of incarnation -- that the infinite has assumed a shape and a form, that the infinite has chosen to show you a tangible, bodily form. It seems self-contradictory, but this is what incarnation means. Incarnation is a sort of balcony from where you can see the vast sky. Incarnation is a glimpse of the formless -- you can't have any direct contact with the formless, the experience of it will be in some form. And once this happens, the experience can easily be repeated through that form again and again.

Whosoever has seen Buddha will find him rising, alive, from his picture or image. For whoever loves Buddha, the idol of him will slowly disappear and Buddha's living being will be felt there. Buddha, Mahavira, Krishna or Christ -- all of them leave behind methods of contact. Through those methods their devotees can establish contact with them. So the form of the idol is a very specific arrangement.

The art and science of making an idol consists of many concepts and calculations. If these are remembered while making an idol, then that idol can lead you deeper into meditation. In this connection it will be good to remember two or three things....

If you have seen many of Buddha's idols you will have observed that they represent a certain state of mind rather than a particular individual. If you look deeply at an idol of Buddha, within a few moments you will feel that a great compassion is showering on you from all around. Buddha's raised hand, his half-closed eyes, his proportionately sculptured face, his graceful expression, his delicate way of sitting -- all are in some deeper sense meant to evoke compassion in you.

Someone asked a great French artist why he painted. He said, "I draw pictures only to find what form a certain emotion, a certain feeling of my heart, can take on a canvas. In my efforts to express that feeling, a picture emerges." If someone meditates on that picture, he can experience the same emotion as was present in the painter's heart.

When you see a painting you just see a form; you don't realize that the soul of the artist is entering you. Those crisscross lines on the canvas are not just the lines of that form. If you concentrate on them, a picture with crisscross lines will emerge within you too... because it is the nature of the mind that it vibrates in you with a similar resonance to that which it sees outside it.

You probably do not know that the joy which you feel when you see a flower is not so much because of the flower itself but because of the symmetry of its petals, which is also induced in you. When you are attracted to a beautiful face of someone, it is not because of that person's beauty but because it corresponds to your inner image of beauty. It produces a resonance of beauty in you which makes you feel that something within you is also beautified. In a similar way, the presence of an ugly face makes you feel uncomfortable. The experience of joy in the presence of someone who is beautiful is

because of the flow of beauty which it brings about in you, making you also more beautiful. Ugliness means that something is disproportionate, crude, non-symmetrical and crooked; and this evokes in us a feeling of disharmony, repulsion, disorder and discomfort.

Nijinsky, the famous Russian ballet dancer, committed suicide. When people went to his house to investigate, they came out within ten or fifteen minutes feeling a sort of discomfort. They said that it did not feel good to go into his house, that if anyone stayed in it as long as Nijinsky had, they too would commit suicide. What was it about his house which was so unpleasant? He had painted all the walls and ceilings red and black -- for two years it had been like this. It was not surprising that he went mad and that he committed suicide. Those who went inside his house said that if anyone were to stay in that house for two years they would also go mad and commit suicide. Nijinsky must have been a very courageous man -- he had created around himself a very anarchic situation.

Whatsoever you see creates its echo within you, and in some deep sense you become like that which you see. All idols of Buddha are made to reflect compassion because that is his inner message. Buddha said if you have compassion you have everything. What does compassion mean? It does not mean love. Love comes and goes but compassion is a love which, once it comes, never goes. In love there is a subtle desire to get something from the other. In compassion there is the awareness that no one has anything to give; everyone is so poor that there is nothing they can give, and that is why there is compassion. There is no demand in compassion. In this state there is no desire even to give, but all the doors of the heart become wide open and something spontaneously begins to be distributed.

Buddha told his disciples, "When you meditate, worship or pray, remember to immediately distribute whatsoever peace you receive. Don't keep it with you even a moment -- I call you irreligious if you do so. When you are full of joy after meditation, immediately pray to the supreme being to let that joy be distributed to those who need it. Open the doors of your heart and let the joy flow towards all those who need it -- just as water flows down the mountains." This great compassion is described by Buddha as the ultimate liberation. So all the idols of Buddha were made in such a way that in their presence the worshiper would feel the resonance and vibrations of compassion within himself.

How can you worship Buddha? If you want to worship Buddha, the center of worship will be the heart. If you don't know this you will never be able to understand Buddha's idol, because the very purpose of it is to create compassion in you. The center of compassion is the heart, so while worshiping Buddha, the center of attention should be on -- one end -- his heart, and on the other end, our own heart. You will have to feel both hearts beating in one rhythm. Then a moment will come when you feel a thread connecting your heart to that within Buddha's idol. You will not only feel that, but you will be able to see the pulsation of the idol's heart. When that happens you will know that life has been imparted to it; otherwise, there is no life in it and worshiping it is meaningless.

The heart of the idol can be seen to be pulsating: if you have properly meditated on the pulsations of your heart and at the same time on Buddha's heart, a relationship will be

established between the two. Then your heart is beating with Buddha's, just as you see your face reflected in a mirror.

Have you ever watched in a mirror your heart beating? You will say a mirror is a mirror, it is bound to reflect all movements. An idol is also a mirror in a deep sense, in a deeper religious sense. So your heart and that of the idol will pulsate. Until this happens, worship can't begin because the idol is still only of stone and unsanctified; life has not been invoked in it.

If you want to meditate on the idol of Buddha, the center has to be the heart. If you want to meditate on Mahavira, there is a different center; for Jesus, a third center and for Krishna, a fourth.... All idols are made with a different center as the basis. Even though a society may have been worshiping a certain idol for thousands pf years, it may not be aware of its center, and if the center is not known you can't establish a connection with the idol. You may offer flowers and incense, you may bow down to it -- but you will have done it all before a mere stone. Remember, the stone has to be transformed into a deity! That part will not be done by the sculptor, it will have to be done by you. The sculptor will only give it a shape: who will pour life into it? Life has to be instilled in it by the devotee. Without that, it is just a stone. Worship only begins after life has been given to the idol.

What is worship? Once you are able to invoke life into the idol, you are worshiping a real, alive deity. Try to understand this deeply: as soon as something becomes alive, the form and the formless become one... because the body is the form, and the life that is in it is the formless. Life has no form.

If my someone cuts my hand, my life is not cut. If I am hypnotized or anesthetized and my hand is cut off, I will not feel any pain. My whole brain can be removed without my becoming aware of the operation... because life as such has no shape or form. Wherever there is life, there is a meeting of form and formlessness.

Matter has a shape, consciousness has none. As long as an idol is just a stone, there is only shape and form; but as soon as a devotee invokes life in it, it becomes alive. Remember, the worshiper who cannot bring his heart to pulsate in the idol will not be able to have the heart of the supreme pulsate within him. He is not yet a true devotee. As soon as he is able to make his heart pulsate within the idol, the idol is brought alive, and then the door to the infinite opens. On one end the idol has form; at the other it is formless. To travel through this door is worship.

Worship is the journey to formlessness through form.

There are several steps to worship, but the first and fundamental one is to understand that every individual is self-centered. Our whole way of living is such that "I am," is the center of the whole world. "The moon and the stars rise for me, the birds are flying for my joy, and the sun too is giving light for me: the whole world is revolving around me, I am the center of the whole world." Such a person cannot know worship. He feels that he is at the center and the rest of the world is his circumference. In worship you see the opposite: the fundamental law of worship is "I am on the circumference, the center is somewhere else." An irreligious man's basic philosophy is that he is the center and the rest of the world is the periphery. Even if God exists, he is on the periphery. "He is for me. If I am sick, he must cure me. If my son is unemployed, he must get him a job. If I'm in trouble, God has to run to my aid...." This type of theism is worse than atheism. Such a person does not understand what he is saying.

The right meaning of worship, the right meaning of prayer, of being religious is to understand that you are on the periphery and the infinite is the center. As soon as the idol's heart is alive and pulsating, as soon as one experiences that the idol is alive, formlessness has entered it. So the basic rule for worship is the feeling, "I am on the periphery -- I shall dance for you, sing for you, live for you and breathe for you. Whatever happens will be for you, the center."

A great philosopher named Totapuri was once staying with Ramakrishna. He asked Ramakrishna how long he was going to remain obsessed with an idol -- it was time he began his journey to the formless. Ramakrishna replied that he was ready to start his journey; he was always ready to learn anything from anybody, he was always ready to learn from whosoever wanted to teach. But he asked Totapuri to wait until he got permission from his mother.

"Which mother?' Totapuri asked.

Ramakrishna replied, "My mother, the goddess Kali."

Totapuri said, "That's exactly what I am saying! How long will you go on being caught up with that stone idol of Kali? Do you want to ask that stone?"

Ramakrishna replied, "There is no way but to ask her. From the moment I began to worship her, she became the center and I moved to the circumference. Now that I am not, she has to be asked permission. Whatever I do is for her. Without her permission, even enlightenment is meaningless; and if she orders me to go to hell, I am ready. But without asking her, nothing can be done."

Totapuri could not understand this. If Ramakrishna had to ask Kali permission to stop worshiping her, how would she grant it? Do we ask the permission of a person we want to give up? Is any permission needed to give up anything?

By this time, Ramakrishna had gone to the temple. Totapuri followed him. He saw tears coming from Ramakrishna's eyes: he was begging Kali again and again to allow him to stop worshiping her. He told her that Totapuri was waiting for him.... Then suddenly he became joyous and began dancing. Totapuri, who was standing behind him, asked what had happened.

Ramakrishna said, "She has given her permission! Now I am ready to learn from you!"

The meaning of having someone as your center is that your life is now a surrendered life.

Worshiping means a surrendered life.

Worshiping the supreme being means living as the supreme being wants. Sitting and standing, eating and drinking, speaking and remaining silent also for the supreme being.

As soon as one has the infinite at the center, a mysterious current begins to flow, a sort of expansion begins.

As it is, we have contracted ourselves. When the seed breaks, it begins to be a tree. We have contracted ourselves in our "I": when that "I" breaks, sprouts come out and the expansion begins. These sprouts can expand so much to encompass the whole world.

Religion is full of great mysteries. One who tries to save himself, dies; whereas one who keeps the supreme being at the center and himself at the circumference lives. We don't understand how such a thing can happen because from our very birth we have believed ourselves to be the center of the world.

Buddha used to suggest to his disciples to spend a few days in a cremation ground. They needed to do that for three months before they could be initiated as bhikkus. They would say that they had come to learn from him, not from a crematorium. But Buddha insisted and said, "After three months in the burning place, your 'I' will become surrendered and it will easier to teach you. Daily, for three months, you will see dead bodies being burnt: at least on one day during these three months you will begin to think that this world is not just existing for you. When you were not here, the world existed. This person, whose body you are watching being burnt, also thought just moments before his death that the world existed for him. The world does not even know now that this person is no more. The sea did not notice that a wave has vanished.

"So you go on watching, and when you realize that the world is not existing for you, come to me; then the real meditation can begin. As long as you are at the center there is no possibility of real worship, of prayer or meditation; there is only a deep illusion. Worship will begin when that illusion vanishes. Worship begins when 'I' is dropped and 'thou' is significant."

Remember, first the devotee makes the idol disappear and opens the door to the formless. Then he makes himself disappear and worship begins. As soon as a door to the formless opens through an idol, the dissolution of one's ego becomes easier. As soon as the devotee realizes that a stone idol can disappear to become a door to the formless, he realizes that he too can become a door to the formless; that if he can forget his self a deeper jump becomes possible.

There can be a distinction between two forms, but not as far as the formless is concerned, because the formless is only one. When the idol has become formless and the devotee has become formless, then there is nothing like "two." Numbers have no value in relation to the formless. The form and numbers are only props and there are methods to make props useful. In this connection there are a few things to be understood....

Sufis have given great importance to dancing as worship. Devotees like Meera and Chaitanya also attached great value to dancing -- it has a few a qualities which have led many devotional schools to chose it as a method.

The first effect of dancing is that while dancing you experience that you are not the body. Because of the fast movements of dancing you feel that you and your body are separate. In reality there is an adjustment between your body and your consciousness. It is a well-arranged adjustment: in your day to day work, that adjustment remains intact.

Gurdjieff used to say that if there are many pebbles in a container, and you shake the container vigorously, the arrangement of things inside will be disturbed. A pebble that was lying at the bottom will come to the top, one lying in the middle will move to the side, and one which was on top will be in the middle: the whole arrangement within the can will become topsy-turvy. If one pebble was used to being in a certain place in relation to other pebbles, and it became identified with that position, its ego will be destroyed. The stone will feel, "I am no more," that it was only an arrangement, and that arrangement is no more.

So the Sufis, Meera and Chaitanya, have make profound use of dancing. The Dervish dancing is very deep: in it, the dancer's body spins so fast and with such totality that every cell and fiber of his body vibrates. This breaks the relationship between the body and the consciousness, and suddenly the dancer realizes that he is separate from his body.

So using dance for worship is very valuable.

There are two Christian sects, one of which is known as the Quakers and the other as the Shakers. The Quakers, even today, are quite influential. The names of the sects are very significant. During their worship, the Shakers shake the body so vigorously that every nerve and fiber of the body becomes a trembling. Standing in front of his idol, when his body vibrates so strongly, the Shaker perspires heavily. At that point he will experience that his consciousness is separate from his body. Then that consciousness moves into worship.

The Quakers' name is meaningful -- their bodies quake very strongly when they worship. In an earthquake, the land vibrates so much that everything comes crashing down; the Quakers also quake so much that the body's connection with the consciousness is broken. This type of movement, dance and devotional songs, have all been used to create a gap between body and consciousness.

In this connection let us understand a little about the science of sound. Science believes that the ultimate unit of all matter is electricity. The Eastern sages believe that the ultimate unit of matter is not electricity but sound. Modern physics believes that ultimately all matter is made up of electricity, whereas the eastern sages say that sound is the basic unit of all matter. Whatever the truth may be, the thing to be understood is that there is a close relationship between electricity and sound. It is possible that the statements of the scientist and the sage are both true simultaneously. If not today, tomorrow the reality of the ultimate element will be known: one form of that element is sound, and the other is electricity. What that element is has to be discovered. Searching from the religious aspect, the sage reaches the knowledge that sound is the ultimate; searching from the material aspect the scientist has been led to electricity. Remember, the sage has searched within himself, not within matter: within your own self, the ultimate experience of your existence is that of sound. As long as you are aware of yourself, there will be the awareness of sound. The deeper you go within yourself, the less audible will be the sound, until it becomes a void. That very silence has its own sound, the "soundless sound," which Indian sages have described as anahat nada. That anahat nada is the ultimate sound: the last experience of human consciousness, before it enters the formless, is this sound. Because of this experience, the Indian sages say that sound is the ultimate element.

The scientist divides and subdivides matter into its smallest component, and just before it disappears into the formless it is seen as the electron. Then when matter is completely lost and the formless appears, what remains is electricity.

What has to be thought about is whether the smallest, the ultimate part of consciousness, comes before the smallest part of matter. It is certain that consciousness is more subtle than matter, hence the ultimate part of consciousness must exist before that matter. So the Indian sages have held the view that sound is more subtle than electricity, that it comes before electricity, and is the ultimate source of everything.

Music, song, prayer and chanting are all uses of sound. Every sound creates a particular state within you; there is no sound which doesn't.

Scientists who are experimenting with sound electronics now know that if special musical instruments are played in front of a plant it will grow flowers one month earlier than it otherwise would have. If special musical instruments are played in front of cows,

they will give twice as much milk. If the wrong instruments, or wrong music is played, they may not give any milk at all.

Sound really reaches within you and strikes your consciousness. Your neck can be cut with a sword, but with the sword of sound your mind can be cut. The edge of sound is sharper, and it disconnects your mind from its various preoccupations. So experiments with the edge of sound have been made in which sound is used to cut off the mind of a meditator or a devotee so he can begin his journey to the infinite. All religions have used special sounds and experimented with them to cleanse and purify the mind.

Recently someone from Japan came to me. For the last two years he has been doing a practice of the Soto School of Zen. In this practice, the sound of "Mu... mu" is made most of his waking time; except when he rests and eats, this sound is continuously uttered. He gets up at three in the morning, takes a bath, and begins to repeat "Mu... mu." He does this for three days, and his thoughts becomes less and less. The sound of "Mu... mu" continues to reverberate; a sort of storm is created within; it becomes like a sword and cuts off all thinking.

After seven days he doesn't need to create the sound: it becomes automatic and spreads all over his body. Whatsoever he may be doing -- sitting or walking... anything -- within him the silent repetition of "Mu... mu" continues. Every cell and every fiber vibrates in its rhythm. It is difficult to eat, because the sound of "Mu..." is going on. After seven days sleep is difficult too because his mouth goes on repeating "Mu... mu." During whatever sleep he does have the sound goes deeper and deeper.

After twenty-one days he begins to shout and roar the sound "Mu... mu" like a lion. His eyes, his face and his behavior change. His teacher goes on goading him to continue. Once he begins to roar, his eating, drinking and sleeping drop. In the fourth week he becomes as if mad -- a state where he has no awareness of anything except the sound, "Mu... mu." If you ask his name, he will reply, "Mu." He loses all awareness of his body, only the awareness of "Mu..." remains. He does not know who he is. At this stage he has to be watched and guarded -- he may do anything, he may go anywhere.

In the last stage, he roars with his total strength. It is as if some wound has opened or a ghost has possessed him. And then everything calms down; a huge wave of the ocean has taken its last leap and fallen apart. The climax has passed and everything within him has scattered.

He falls down and remains unconscious, without any movements, quiet and peaceful for one to three weeks. When he comes back to consciousness he is not the same person; he is a new man. The old man has died: now nothing that was old -- his anger, his desires, his greed -- can be traced. The continuity with his past is broken. With this experiment of "Mu," with this great explosion of sound, his whole consciousness is transformed.

"Aum" is a similar sound. All religions have their own sounds which are used in worship. As the worship deepens, the impact of these sounds transform the devotee. Devotional songs and the playing of musical instruments are basic for transformation, and that is why repetition is significant. If you sing one song today, a different one tomorrow and a third on the next day, there will be no result. There must be a continuous hammering on the same particular center.

If you hammer a tent peg into different spots, it will never go into the ground. If you dig two feet at one place, two feet at another place and two feet at another, you will never

be able to dig a well. Similarly, changing centers and places does not bring results. To dig a well, digging has to be done on one spot only. That's why repetition has been insisted upon -- so much so that for a whole month you have to repeat "Mu..." or "Aum," or a single line of a song, again and again, in the same rhythm. But there is a danger that the repetition becomes mechanical, as if it is just a job to be done, and then it will be useless.

The repetition has to be a question of life and death, as if you are totally staking everything on it. Every hair, every cell, every fiber of the body participates; every nerve, every bone, every piece of flesh and muscle become involved... every drop of blood has to call aloud. When your whole existence becomes that sound, there will be results. The devotee has to repeat only one word, or a line of a song, for years together, for a special reason: you hammer on one spot again and again so that the door might break open -- and it does!

So sound, dancing and music have all been used in worship.

These have all been done in front of an idol -- let this be remembered, because dancing as such is a different matter. Many people dance but they do not become enlightened. If they are dancing for the sake of dancing, that has no relationship with the infinite. So everything has to be done in relationship to the infinite and hence in front of the idol that has been made alive. That idol will continuously remind you that the dance is not for the sake of dancing. The dancing is on the periphery; the center is the idol, the center is in the supreme being. All is in preparation for a jump into the ultimate. Otherwise there are dancers, musicians, singers who are all superb in their art -- even devotees can sing very well. But this is not of any relevance; the devotee is not concerned with music or song, his purpose is different. His whole effort is to become so overwhelmed that he can dissolve and lose himself so fully that the inner flow takes over and sets him afloat in the infinite. He has to become the circumference, with the supreme at the center. He has to create such liquidity that he can remain afloat, and flow.

Usually you will find a devotee with tears flowing down his cheeks. He is not weeping out of unhappiness but out of joy. Tears flow when everything within has become liquid, fluid -- either out of misery or overwhelming joy.

Up to now scientists have not been able to explain the purpose of tears. At best, they have discovered that tears are meant for cleaning the eyes of dust. Tear glands are only meant to clean the eyes. But why do tears flow when one is in pain, when one is unhappy or when one is overjoyed? Does dust only fall into the eyes at those times, and not otherwise?

Whenever there is an overflowing, when there is an extreme of either pain or pleasure, tears begin to flow. The tear glands open, and tears flow out. Devotees also weep, but their weeping has a different quality. One who is not a devotee will not be able to understand it. What happens to a devotee that makes him weep? You may think that he must have some difficulties and because of them he is weeping, with folded hands. But one who is weeping because of his difficulties still has himself as a center. He is still not a devotee; he does not know what worship is.

But there are moments when all frozenness and rigid that have solidified within us begin to liquify, and the awareness of that happening makes tears flow. Those tears flow in gratitude and thankfulness towards the supreme. We have nothing but our tears to give to the grace that is flowing towards us. We feel we don't deserve whatever we have

received and that we can't contain the joy that is descending on us. We had never even dreamt of such a feeling -- and we have nothing to show our gratitude. Neither words nor anything else can adequately express it.

In such moments the eyes weep in a different way. The devotee's eyes weep differently from those of a lover. The lover also weeps, but that weeping has a different quality. The lover's tears are full of small desires, demands, but in the devotee's tears there are no demands. His eyes weep for no reason -- he is simply helpless. Even while he wants to give thanks, words do not come out of his mouth, and when the mouth cannot speak, the eyes begin to speak in their own way.

The perfection, the completion of worship, is in tears, in their fluidity and their flowing out.

The idol has been used in many different ways to experience ecstasy. Those who speak against idols do not know what worship means. Anything can be said by someone who does not know; people are very ignorant and do not know anything. They accept whatever they hear -- especially the negative. It is a law that the mind easily accepts that which is negative because it doesn't have to take any trouble to prove it.

If someone says, "There is no God," he does not have to prove anything. But whoever says, "There is a God," has to prove it. So the mind easily accepts that which is negative, but before it accepts anything positive, it makes certain conditions; otherwise it will have to take the trouble to prove it.

Worship is positive, idols are positive. In denying something there is nothing to lose.

Turgenev has written a small story.... In a certain town there was a very intelligent man, and quite influential too. And in the same town there lived an utter fool, an idiot. One day the idiot approached the intelligent man and asked to be shown some way of becoming intelligent. The intelligent man asked the idiot whether he wanted to be intelligent or appear to be intelligent, because to become intelligent was a long process, but to look intelligent was easy. The idiot replied that he wanted to be shown the easier way -- that if it was enough if he looked intelligent, he did not want to bother about becoming intelligent.

The intelligent man commented that in becoming intelligent there was a possibility to make a mistake, but in looking intelligent there could be no mistake. The idiot then became impatient and requested that the trick be revealed without any delay. The intelligent man whispered something in his ear -- and from that day on the idiot gradually began to become known as intelligent throughout the town.

The people of the town began to gossip; How had this fool suddenly become intelligent? What had the intelligent man told him?

He had simply told to the fool to immediately negate every statement he heard. If anyone said, "There is something to idol worship," the idiot was immediately to reply that there wasn't. The idiot asked the intelligent man, "Should I say such things even when I don't know anything about the subject?"

The intelligent man said, "You don't have to bother about knowing anything at all -- just negate whatever is said. If somebody tells you that the works of Kalidas are wonderful, just say it is all rubbish! Tell them to prove that they are! If anyone says that Beethoven's music is heavenly, say that even in hell such music is played! And ask the

person to prove what heavenly music is like. Just deny everything, and if anyone opposes you, challenge them to prove their claim."

Within two weeks the idiot became famous throughout the town for his intelligence. People started saying that he was very deep and difficult to judge or understand. If someone said that Shakespeare's poetry is beautiful, he would reply that it was simply rubbish -- any school child could write such poems. Then the person would feel shaky because it was difficult to prove what he was saying.

This century is, in a way, a century of many types of foolishnesses. And the foundation of our foolishness is negation. For a whole century we have been denying one thing after another. When others are not able to prove something, they also join in the negating. But remember the more negative a life is, the more insignificant it becomes.

No truth can be known without being positive.

The more negative a life is, although it will seem more intelligent outwardly, inwardly it will be more stupid. The more negative a life is, the less will it be possible for truth, joy and beauty to penetrate it, because all elevating experiences happen only to a positive mind. All experiences of value can be had only by a positive mind.

Whenever someone says "no," something within his mind closes. Have you ever thought about the effect of words? If you close yourself in your room and loudly say "no," you will find that your whole heart contracts and becomes closed. If you loudly say "yes," you will find that your heart opens its wings and flies into the sky. Words are not just born: the uttering of them creates some parallel event. In saying "no," something contracts within you, and in saying "yes," something opens within you.

Someone asked St Augustine, "What is your worship? What is your prayer?"

St. Augustine replied, "Yes, yes and yes, my Lord! This much is my worship."

He may not have understood what he had said, but whoever says yes to his life in its totality is a theist. Theism does not mean just saying yes to the existence of God, it is the capacity to say yes. The atheist does not just deny the existence of God, the atheist has only the capacity to say no. Such a person will go on shrinking and contracting and will ultimately decay. But saying yes makes a person open up and expand so much that he merges with the infinite.

Idol worship is a very positive method. But you have to meditate and go so deep into the idol, into the worship, that you come to know that there is no idol, only worship. The idol is just the beginning.

It is true that the worship is of an idol, but in a deeper sense you will find that it is your own transformation. The idol is just an excuse, and that excuse makes it easy to transform oneself.

Dr. Rudolf, about whom I was speaking earlier, developed an important principle, which will be useful for you to know about. Whenever some thought arises in your mind, it has to travel through nerves and muscles, through the whole mechanism of the body. For example, if in my mind the thought has arisen to love you and to take your hand in mine, immediately that thought begins to travel -- passing from the brain and the mechanism of the body until it reaches to my fingertips.

Rudolf says that when a thought it born it has the power of one hundred units; by the time it reaches the fingertips, only one unit remains. Ninety-nine units of power are used up in the transmission, in translating that thought into action. All thoughts become

lifeless by the time they reach the outer surface of the body. That's why more happiness is actually experienced at the thought of taking your beloved's hand than the experience of it. At the moment of the experience you feel the experience was not as satisfying as you had expected. What happened? Why was the fulfillment of the thought less fulfilling than the thought itself?

When someone thinks about making love, he feels elated, but after making love he is left feeling depressed. He feels it was not so great after all. Why? When the thought was conceived it had the potentiality of a hundred units, but by the time it reached the periphery, it was reduced to one unit. Sometimes the potentiality is zero or is even negative. If the body is sick, the energy lost as the thought travels through consumes all the power and turns it negative. So if you are sick, you may have expected to feel happy when you held your beloved's hand, but instead, by the time the thought has traveled to your hand, taking her hand makes you unhappy. The experience becomes negative. Rudolf says that if this is true, then man will never become happy.

Is there no way that one's thought can directly jump into another's mind? Religion says there is. Rudolf has also confirmed this through hundreds of experiments -- that my thought can take a direct jump into another's mind, without using the medium of my physical body. To do so, I stop my thought at the third eye center by closing my eyes, and make it jump directly to your third eye. The whole system of telepathy depends on this art.

Rudolf demonstrated this by transmitting a thought one thousand miles. In Russia, Howard, and many others in other countries' experiments, gave proof of telepathy. In this experiment, you concentrate your thought on your third eye, as if your thought has become a small sun revolving rapidly in your mind. That small sun becomes focused and highly potent. The thought is not allowed to spread to the rest of the body, which would allow loss of energy; the energy has to accumulate at one point, where it remains focused like a strong ray of light. Just when you feel that it cannot become more focused, more concentrated -- that is the moment for the thought to jump. At exactly that moment you have to project the thought into the mind of the other person. However far away the person may be, he must be in your field of imagination, and you need to imagine that the thought has entered into the mind of the other person through his third eye. Once this happens, the thought is transferred.

Telepathy is an art of projecting a thought into someone else without any physical medium. The third eye has been meditated on in many ways for religious purposes. It can be used for communicating with the cosmic mind as well as with the human mind. For example, you are sitting in front of Mahavira's idol.... Mahavira's consciousness has become one with the infinite, but if you concentrate your total energy at the third eye center and project it into the idol's head, your thought will be transmitted to the consciousness of Mahavira. In this way many people who have come after Mahavira are helped. For such people, Buddha, Mahavira and Christ are not dead but alive here and now. For them there is a direct communication.

This experiment can be used to take a jump into the infinite. But how will you find the third eye of the infinite? To where will you project your thought energy? To where will you make it jump?

It will be easier to communicate through the medium of an idol. Directly projecting the thought beam into the infinite is difficult. It can be done, but for that there is a

different technique. The religions which have not used idols have used that technique, but it is very difficult. So those religions which at first didn't use idols finally came around to using them.

Islam has not used the idol, but the mosque has become the idol. And the graves of Moslem saints are worshiped. Even today, in any part of the world, when a Mohammedan says his prayers he faces the direction of the Kaaba. Those who know have used the Kaaba through which to project their thoughts. Those who don't understand the secret meaning just stand facing the direction of the Kaaba while they pray.

It doesn't make any difference whether you project onto the Kaaba or an idol. It makes no difference whether the feet of the idol or the stone of Kaaba is kissed: it is one and the same. There is no photograph of Mohammed, there is no idol of Mohammed, but what difference has it made? Something else was done. No idol or picture of Mohammed was ever made, but devotees shower flowers on the tombs of Moslem saints. It was not possible to find an equally powerful substitute for Mohammed.

So if Krishna instructs his devotees to bow down at the feet of his image, he is farsighted in understanding their problems. Krishna knew that it is very difficult for a man to avoid using an idol; taking a direct jump into the infinite is so difficult that only one out of ten might succeed. Then what will happen to the rest? If Krishna's idol is not available, they may use just any idol which will be very ordinary.

What has been the effect of prohibiting the use of an idol of Mohammed? If some Muslim fakir dies in some town, Muslims gather around his tomb. The Muslims are not at fault, it is the inner nature of man that is responsible. I feel that what the idol of Mohammed could have done cannot be done by the tomb of a fakir. Though Mohammed was right in saying there is no need for an idol, that is true only for one man in a million. And for such a person there is nothing to be reached. He doesn't need an idol, nor a Kaaba nor a Koran or the Gita; he does not need Islam, or Krishna or Buddha. For him, everything is unnecessary -- he can reach directly. But what about others?

For the rest, all those things are needed, and when something is needed it is better to have the best. It is better, instead of worshiping the tomb of a fakir or the idol of some virtuous person, to have the idol of a Buddha, a Krishna, a Mohammed or a Mahavira. When you have to travel by sea, it is risky to go by a small, locally made boat; it is better to travel in a large ship or steamer. When the boat of Buddha is available, it is stupid to depend on an amulet made by some fakir, or to the grave of a person whose blessings may have helped some people to recover from a disease. But if Buddha's idol is not available, because of man's inner need he will look for a substitute.

Superficially it seems as if those who have rejected idol worship have said something great. But those who are for idol worship have the experience of thousands of years, and they knew from experience that a person will need an idol. Most people have a limitation in that they cannot reach the infinite directly. That is why it is better to provide the best of rest camps in between.

There has been no society on earth which did not have an idol. No group of human beings in any corner of the world has existed where there was no idol in one form or other. This indicates that the idol fulfills some inherent need, not just for the individual but for the whole of humanity. It is only in this century or the last two hundred years that the concept of an idol has been shattered. Some people argue that idols are a meaningless burden, just stones, and they must be removed. But if first the meaning behind idol

worship is properly understood, I don't think that any intelligent person will want to remove idols. But if the scientific thought behind idol worship is not understood, then idols will have to be removed; they can't be saved. They will probably fall away by themselves.

Today people worship idols without understanding and bow down before them without knowing anything. Their hearts do not participate, it is just a formality that has remained. Such people will only be the cause of the destruction of the idol -- because although they go daily go to worship idols, there is no transformation in their lives and so idol worship seems futile.

A person worships an idol for forty years -- and nothing happens to him.... And he drags his son to the temple too. When the son asks his father that if he hasn't got anything from forty years of worship, why is he being forced to go to the temple, there is no answer. If something had happened in the father, the question wouldn't have arisen. There is a small fable of Aesop.... In a forest, a lion was asking every animal he came across whether he was the king of the forest or not. He asked a bear, and the bear said, "You are definitely king!" Then he asked a leopard, who hesitated a little but then said that yes, the lion was the king. Then the lion asked the elephant. He immediately picked him up in his trunk and threw him a long distance. While he was falling, the lion said to the elephant, "Oh, great being! If you didn't know the answer you could have simply said so. You didn't need to throw me off -- I would have gone of my own accord!" But the elephant that is powerful enough to lift up and throw the lion does not need to make any reply. It is not necessary to say who is king.

One who worships an idol would not have to make any reply if he only knew what worship was. His life would be the answer. His eyes, the way he sits and stands, would become the reply. But those who do not know what worship is and who still go on worshiping, are responsible for the removal of the idol. They do not know what worship is, but the idols have remained in their hands.

It is because of this that I have talked to you about worship -- so that you might understand that an idol is a method meant for total, inner transformation. The idol is just an excuse.

It is like hanging your coat on a peg. The purpose of the peg is just to hang the coat: if there were no peg, the coat would have been hung on the door or a chair. It has to be hung somewhere. But once it is hung up, you can't see the peg, and so you don't ask any questions about it.

The idol is just a peg -- worship is the main purpose.

But while worshiping the idol you can't see the worship: you can't see the coat, you only see the peg. You feel the peg has spoiled the wall -- why keep it?

You don't know anything about worship. Only the idol remains, utterly helpless and defeated. It may not survive -- it is only the life force of worship that can save it. That is why I have talked to you about worship.

Hidden Mysteries
Chapter #5
Chapter title: Astrology: The Science of Cosmic Oneness
9 July 1971 pm in Woodlands, Bombay, India

Astrology is perhaps the most ancient subject and also in a way the most tabooed. It is the most ancient because as far back as we have been able to investigate the history of mankind, astrology has been in existence. Astrological inscriptions have been found on bone remnants from the Sumerian civilization which existed twenty-five thousand years before Jesus. Bone remnants have been discovered with astrological inscriptions and with an outline of the moon's orbit in the sky.

But in India this science is even older. In the Rigveda, reference is made to a certain constellation of the stars which could only have occurred ninety-five thousand years ago. Because of this, Lokmanya Tilak concluded that the Vedas must certainly be even more ancient: the constellation of the stars as the Vedas described it could only have occurred at a certain moment ninety-five thousand years ago, so that particular vedic reference must be at least ninety-five thousand years old.

That particular vedic reference could not have been added at a later period. Other, younger generations would not have been able to work out a constellation that existed many years before. But now we have scientific methods which we can use to discover where the stars were at a particular moment in the distant past.

The deepest laws of astrology were first discovered in India. In fact it was only because of astrology that mathematics was born. To make astrological calculations, first mathematics was needed.

The digits used in arithmetic were invented in India -- the numbers one to ten which exist in all the world's languages are basically Indian in origin. And throughout the world the decimal system has been accepted: the decimal system was born in India, and it slowly spread throughout the entire world. When you say "nine" in English, it is only a modification of the Sanskrit word nav. When you say "eight" in English, it is only a modification of the Sanskrit word acht. The numerals one to nine, prevalent in all the world's languages, came into existence only because of the influence of Indian astrology.

The first knowledge about the existence of astrology reached the Sumerian civilization from India. Six thousand years before Jesus, the Sumerians were the first to open the doors of astrology to the Western world. The Sumerians laid the foundation for the scientific study of the constellation. They constructed a gigantic tower, seven hundred feet tall, and from that tower Sumerian priests used to observe the sky twenty-four hours a day. Sumerian metaphysicians soon learned that whatever happens to mankind is somehow ultimately connected with the stars -- they are the source.

Six thousand years before Jesus, it was the view in Sumeria that whenever illness occurs, whenever epidemics are born, the stars are somehow connected. These days there is a scientific basis for this view. And those who understand the science of astrology today say it was the Sumerians who began the history of mankind.

In 1920 a Russian scientist, Chijevsky, investigated this matter deeply and discovered that every eleven years, enormous explosions take place on the sun. Every eleven years a nuclear explosion occurs on the sun. Chijevsky discovered that whenever such nuclear explosions occur on the sun, wars and revolutions commence on earth. According to him, during the past seven hundred years, whenever such phenomena have occurred on the sun, there have been disasters on earth.

Chijevsky's analysis was so undeniable, and because it went against the Marxist viewpoint, in 1920 Stalin had him arrested and thrown into prison. Only after Stalin's death could Chijevsky be released. For Stalin, Chijevsky's conclusions must have seemed very strange. According to Marxist and communist thinking, whatever revolutions occur on the earth are fundamentally caused by economic differences among men. But Chijevsky declared that the cause of revolutions is the explosions happening on the sun.

How can explosions on the sun possibly be related to the existence of poverty or wealth in the lives of men? If Chijevsky's thesis is correct, then Marx's entire system disintegrates into dust. Then you can't explain revolutions any longer in reference to economics and class struggle; then only astrology can explain revolution.

Chijevsky could not be proved wrong. His seven hundred year calculation was so scientific, the connection he established between explosions on the sun and phenomena on the earth was so close, that to prove him wrong was difficult. But to send him to Siberia was a simple matter.

After Stalin's death Khrushchev released Chijevsky from Siberia. Fifty valuable years of this man's life were lost in Siberia. After his release he could not live longer than four to six months, but in those few months he gathered together even more evidence for his thesis. He also linked the spread of epidemics on the earth to solar influence.

The sun is not a static ball of fire, as we ordinarily think, but rather an infinitely alive and dynamic, fiery organism. Every moment the sun changes its mood. And when the sun changes its mood even a little bit, life on earth trembles. Nothing happens on the earth without something happening on the sun. When there is a solar eclipse, the birds in the jungle stop singing twenty-four hours before. During the entire time of the eclipse the whole earth becomes silent. The birds stop their singing and all of the animals in the jungle become oppressed and frightened, full of apprehension. The monkeys abandon their trees and come down below. They form themselves into groups, apparently as a means of protection. And it is a surprising thing that these monkeys, who are always gossiping and making a hue and cry, become so quiet at the time of the eclipse that even sadhus and sannyasins in meditation cannot compare with them.

Chijevsky explained this entire matter, but such thinking first originated in Sumeria. Afterwards, a Swiss physician named Paracelsus discovered more information. He made an unparalleled discovery -- and this discovery will transform all of medical science, if not today then tomorrow. Up until now this discovery could not be considered valid because astrology is such an ignored subject -- the most ancient, the most ignored, and the most respected at the same time.

Last year in France it was calculated that forty-five percent of the people believe that astrology is a science. In America, five thousand leading astrologers are currently at work night and day. They have so many clients that they can never finish their work properly -- Americans pay millions of dollars yearly to astrologers. It is estimated that throughout the world, seventy-eight percent of people believe in astrology. This seventy-eight percent who believe in astrology includes a very large number of scientists, thinkers, and other intelligent people.

C.J. Jung said that the doors of the universities have been closed to astrology for three hundred years, but that in the coming thirty years astrology will open those doors and again enter the university. It will be able to because claims that astrology has made which have up to now been unproved can now be proved.

Paracelsus gave birth to one discovery -- that man becomes ill only when the harmonious relationship between him and the constellation of the stars at his birth somehow breaks down. For this, a little explanation is necessary. Many years before Paracelsus, a Greek named Pythagoras gave birth to the very valuable principle of planetary harmony. When Pythagoras proclaimed this principle in Greece, he had just returned from a journey to Egypt and India. When he had come to India, it was intensely absorbed in the ideas of Buddha and Mahavira. After his return to Greece, he included in his reports a specific reference to Buddhist and Jaina sadhus. He gave the Jaina seers the name Jainosophists, and also reported that they walk about naked.

Pythagoras believed that every star, every planet and every satellite gives out a unique vibration through its movement as it travels in space. Every movement of the stars gives out a vibration, and every star has its own individual movement. All the vibrations of the stars together make a musical harmony which he called the harmony of the universe.

When you are born, the melody that is created by the tuning of the stars at that time is inscribed on your mind in its freshest, most unsophisticated, and most sensitive state -- that of birth. Throughout your life this will cause good health or ill health. When you live in tune with the original musical harmony that existed at the time of your birth, then you are healthy. And whenever your tuning with this fundamental musical harmony breaks down, you become ill.

In this connection, Paracelsus has done very significant work. He would not prescribe medicine to any patient until he had seen his kundali -- his astrological birth chart. And it is a surprising thing that after having examined a patient's birth chart, Paracelsus would cure patients who had confused other physicians -- patients who could not be cured by any other physician. He used to say, "Until I know the position of the stars at the time of this man's birth, it is not possible to know the notes of his inner harmony. Unless I know the arrangement of his inner harmony, how can this man be made healthy?"

But what is meant by health? This we must try to understand. Ordinarily, if we ask a physician what the definition of health is, he will only say that health is the absence of sickness. But this definition is negative. It is unfortunate that we must define health in terms of illness. Health is a positive thing, a positive state: illness is negative. Health is our nature; illness is an attack on nature. So it is very strange that we must define health in terms of illness. To define the host in terms of the guest -- this is very strange.

Health coexists with us; illness comes occasionally. Health accompanies us at birth; illness is a superficial phenomenon. But if we ask a physician what is the meaning of health, he can only say that health is present when illness is absent.

Paracelsus used to say that this interpretation is wrong -- the concept of health needs to be positively defined. But how can we reach a positive definition, an interpretation of the concept of health that will be creative?

Paracelsus used to say, "Until we know the state of your inner harmony, we can at the most release you from your illness -- because your inner harmony is the source of your health. But when we release you from one illness, you will immediately catch another, because nothing has been done about your inner harmony. Your inner harmony has to be supported."

Five hundred years have passed since Paracelsus, and his discoveries have disappeared into oblivion. But now, during the past twenty years, astrology has re-emerged. During this time a new science has been born. I will describe this new science a bit, and then you will be able to understand the ancient science of astrology more easily.

In 1950 a new science was born called cosmic chemistry. The originator of this science is Georgi Giardi, one of the most significant men of the century. This man, after endless experiments in the laboratory, proved in a scientific way that the whole universe is an organic unity -- that the whole universe is one body. If my finger is hurt, then my whole body is affected. "Body" means that no limb is separate, all are joined together. If my eye is in pain, then my big toe also experiences that pain. If my foot is hurt, the message reaches the heart. If my mind is ill, my entire body will be disturbed. If my whole body is destroyed, then it will be difficult for my mind to find anywhere to be. The body is an organic unity: touch a single part and the whole body vibrates; all parts are affected.

Cosmic chemistry says that the entire cosmos is a body. Nothing in it stands apart, all things are joined together. So no matter how distant a star may be from us, when it changes our heartbeats also change. And no matter how far away the sun may be, when it becomes very disturbed our blood circulation is also disturbed. Every eleven years an atomic storm occurs on the sun. T he last time such a great atomic storm and fiery explosions were going on, a Japanese doctor named Tamatto made an amazing discovery. This doctor had been doing work on women's blood for twenty years. There is one property unique to female blood which is absent in the blood of males. At the time of menstruation the blood of women becomes thin, but men's blood always remains the same. Women's blood at the time of menstruation grows thin; at the time of pregnancy also their blood grows thin. This is one basic difference between the blood of men and women, according to Tamatto. But when atomic energy storms were occurring on the sun with great intensity, the blood of men also grew thin. This was a very novel phenomenon. Before this it had never been recorded that men's blood was affected by disturbances on the sun. And if blood can be so affected, then anything can be affected.

There is an American thinker, Frank Brown, who has been trying to arrange facilities for travelers in space. For half his life, he has made it his task to ensure that the men who travel into space will face no difficulty. The most serious problem is how they will be affected as they leave the earth. No one knows how much atomic radiation they may encounter or how it may affect them.

For two thousand years after Aristotle, in the West it was thought that space is empty, that nothing is there: two hundred miles away from earth the atmosphere ceases and there is empty space. But the investigations of space travelers have proved this notion to be wrong. Space is not empty, it is very full. It is neither empty nor dead -- it is extremely alive.

The truth is that the two-hundred-mile wide layer of the earth's atmosphere prevents many harmful influences from reaching us. But in space all kinds of strange currents are flowing, the effects of which man may not be able to withstand.

You will be surprised to learn this, and you will laugh, but before he would let a man be sent into space, Frank Brown sent a potato into space. It was Brown's contention that there is very little essential difference between a man and a potato. If the potato rots, then man cannot survive; if the potato survives, then man may also survive. The potato is

a very hardy organism, and man is very sensitive. If even a potato cannot survive in space then for man there is no hope of survival. If a potato returns alive, and if it sprouts after being sown in the ground, then man can be sent into space. However, there would still be fear concerning man's ability to survive.

From his experiment Brown proved one more thing -- that a potato seed lying in the ground, or any seed lying in the ground, grows only in relation to the sun. The sun alone arouses it and encourages it to emerge. The sun alone summons the embryo plant and induces its growth.

Brown also did research in another field. This other subject has even now not been given a suitable name, but at present it is called planetary heredity. There is another word in English, horoscope, which comes from the Greek horoscopos. The meaning of the word horoscopos is: I observe the emerging planets.

When a child is born, at that moment many stars are emerging all around the earth's horizon. Just as the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, so stars rise and set in space twenty-four hours a day. If a child is being born at six o'clock in the morning, at that time the sun too is rising. At that time some stars are also being birth, and other stars are setting. Some stars are ascendant; some stars are on the decline, other stars are rising. This child is being born into a certain arrangement of stars in space.

Up until now we have doubted -- and even now many people not deeply familiar with the subject still doubt -- that the moon and stars can have anything to do with man. Wherever the stars may be, what difference will it make to some child being born in a village? And then too, on the same date, under the same constellation not just one child but thousands of children are born.... Among these one may become the president of some country, but the remainder will not. Among these one may die after one hundred years, and another after two days. Among these one will be a genius and one will be an idiot. So from a superficial viewpoint one might ask how a child can be related to a horoscope just by being born under a certain constellation and planetary pattern.

The logic of such a question seems clear and direct: Why would the stars be concerned with the birth of a single child? And then also, not just one child is born; under the very same stars many are born who are not all alike. From such logic it seems that the birth of a human being has no connection with the stars.

But from the investigations of Brown, Picardi, Tamatto and others, we can draw a great conclusion. All these scientists say that while we can't yet claim that a child as an individual is influenced by the stars, still, we can now say for certain that life as a whole is affected. Whether a child is influenced as an individual we cannot now say or know, but life as a whole is. And if life as a whole is, then as we investigate the facts of the matter more deeply we will discover that the individual, too, is affected by the stars.

One thing more must be considered. It has been thought that astrology is a science which, because it originated in an earlier time, could not develop. But in my view the situation is just the opposite. Astrology was an infinitely developed science in some extremely advanced civilization, but that civilization has been lost and only incomplete fragments of its astrology has remained in our hands.

Astrology is not a new science which needs to be developed, but a science which was at one time very advanced. Then the civilization which developed it was lost. Civilizations come and go every day: the fundamentals, the basic sayings and the basic principles of those things which have been developed by them, become lost.

Today, science is approaching the point where it will accept the thesis that life as a whole is affected by the movements of the stars.

At the time of birth, the condition of a child's mind is exactly like a very sensitive photo plate.... Two or three things need to be thought about if we want to understand how life is affected. And only if life is affected can there be the possibility of astrology -- not otherwise.

We should try to understand the phenomenon of twins. Two types of twins exist. One is identical twins -- those who are born from one egg. The other type is those who, although they are twins, are born from separate eggs; in the mother's womb two eggs become fertilized, and two children are born. The first type is more rare -- two children from one egg. They are very significant subjects to study, because they are born at the same time. Out of necessity we call the children born from separate eggs, "twins," but the moment of their birth is not exactly the same. It must be understood that birth is an ambiguous phenomenon. The first aspect of birth is conception -- the actual birth takes place on the day when the foetus is conceived in the mother's womb. This is actual birth. What you call birth is really birth number two -- when the child comes out of the mother's womb.

If we were to carry out a complete astrological investigation -- as the Hindus alone have done, and done very thoroughly -- then our actual concern would not begin when the child is born. Our actual concern begins when the child starts its journey in the mother's womb, when the embryo takes shape -- because that is the actual birth. So Hindus have also come to feel that if a particular type of child is to take birth, it will be born if intercourse and pregnancy occur under an arrangement of planets and constellation most suitable for that type. Now I will explain to you a little of the background of this, because much work has been done in this area and many things have become clear.

Ordinarily, when a child is born at six o'clock in the morning, we think that the constellation which exists at that time influences the child. My view is different, fundamentally different. Just because a child is born at six o'clock in the morning the stars don't cast their influence over him. No. Rather, the child chooses to be born under those stars which will influence him as he wishes to be influenced. This is a radically different thing. When the child is taking birth, then it chooses the planets and stars and the moment at which it will take birth. And if we go still more deeply, then the child also chooses the time of its conception.

Every soul chooses its own time of conception -- when it will accept a womb, at which moment. The moment of conception is not insignificant. It is significant in that it is a question of how the entire universe exists at that moment and to what sort of possibilities the universe opens the door at that moment.

When two children are conceived together from one egg, then the moment of their conception is the same and the moment of their birth is the same. It is interesting that the lives of the two children who have taken birth from one egg are so alike that it is difficult to say that the moment of birth has no influence. The I.Q. of twins born from one egg is just about equal. And the fractional difference which arises -- those who know say that it is because of our faulty measuring devices. Even now we have not been able to develop adequate criteria by which we can quantitatively measure intelligence.

Even if twins born from the same egg are brought up far apart from each other, still their I.Q.'s do not differ. Even if one child is raised in India and another in China, and neither is aware of the existence of the other, this will still be true. Cases have occurred where such twins have been raised far apart from each other until they have attained maturity, but their I.Q.'s did not differ. It is surprising that the I.Q. can be associated with the child's potential at birth.

When the twin who lives in China suffers from a cold, at that time its twin in India also suffers from a cold. Generally, twins born from one egg die in the same year. At the most, three years elapse between their deaths, and at the least, three days -- but never more than three years. If one twin has died then we can assume that after three days or within three years, the other will die. Their attitudes, their behavior, their feelings, are parallel, and it seems that the two live in almost exactly the same way. Their similarity is seen in many other things also -- each acts like a copy of the other.

Is the moment of birth so influential that their lifetimes are of about the same lengths, that their I.Q.'s are almost equal, that their bodily behavior is the same, that when the two fall ill it is from the same illness, and that when the two become well again it is from the same medicine? Can the moment of birth be so influential?

Astrology has been saying that the moment of birth is even more important than this. Up until now science has not agreed with astrology, but now it is beginning to do so. In coming to this increasing agreement, some new experiments have been helpful.

For example.... At the time when we launched an artificial satellite into space, we learnt that a network of infinite types of radiation continuously pour out from the universe and from the constellations, and are diffused throughout the earth. On the earth, nothing is unaffected by this phenomenon. We know that the ocean is influenced by the moon, but we have not taken into consideration the fact that the same relative proportion of water and salt that occurs in the ocean occurs also in the human body -- the same proportion. Forty-five percent of the human body consists of water, and the proportion of salt contained in that water is the same as is contained in thousands of bays. If the water in the ocean is affected by the moon, then how could the water inside the human body remain unaffected?

Now, in this connection, two or three facts emerging from recent investigations must be kept in mind. For example, as the day of the full moon approaches, the amount of madness in the world increases. And on the last day of the darker fourteen days, the least number of people go mad. As the moon grows brighter the proportion of madmen also begins to increase. On the day of the full moon, the greatest number of people enter madhouses; and on the last day of the moon's waning period, the greatest number of people are discharged from madhouses. Statistics are now available....

In English there is the word lunatic; in Hindi there is the word chaandmara. Chaand refers to the moon, just as lunar does in English. Chaandmara is a very ancient term, and the word lunatic also is some three thousand years old. Some three thousand years ago, the thought came to men that the moon does something to the insane. But if it does something to the insane, then how can it avoid affecting the sane?

In the final analysis, the construction of the brain and the internal composition of the body are the same for all. Yes, it may be that the moon affects madmen to a greater extent, and the sane to a lesser extent. This is simply a quantitative difference. But it is impossible that the sane remain completely unaffected by the moon. If that was true, then

nobody could go mad -- because everyone who goes mad was once sane. The moon must first do something to those who are sane.

Professor Brown made an interesting study. He was a man completely without faith in astrology. He was a disbeliever, and in his earlier writings he had very much ridiculed astrology. But despite his skepticism he began some investigation. He gathered together the kundali, the birth charts of many famous generals, doctors, and other professions. But then he found himself in great difficulty because he discovered that members of a certain profession were born under a special planet, under the same constellation. For instance, among all famous generals the influence of Mars upon their lives is very strong. In the lives of professors the influence of Mars is completely absent.

The study which Brown carried out on some fifty thousand men who are generals, reveals that in the lives of these men the influence of Mars is very strong. Generally, when such personalities take birth, the planet Mars is ascending. The moment of their birth is the moment that Mars begins to rise. Just the opposite to this, no matter how many professors there are in the world, they never take birth at the time of the planet Mars' ascension. If it happened only occasionally, you could think it a coincidence -- but there cannot be a hundred thousand cases of coincidence.

Mathematicians are born under a specific constellation; poets are never born under this same constellation. In an occasional case there can be a coincidence, but when it happens so often it cannot be a coincidence.

In fact there is a great difference in behavior among people of different professions and occupations -- for example, between poets, mathematicians, generals, and pacifists. On the one hand there can be a man like Bertrand Russell who says that there should be peace in the world, and on the other hand a man like Nietzsche who says that the day war ceases the world will cease to be meaningful. Between them is there only an intellectual dispute, or also a dispute of stars? Is there only an intellectual distance between them, or does the moment of their births also separate them?

The more research is done, the more it is being discovered that the talents of a man are revealed by the time of his birth. Those who know even a little bit about astrology say that this happens by his being born under a specific constellation. But I want to say to you that man chooses the constellation under which he is to be born. According to what he wants to be -- whatever his innate possibilities, whatever the shape of his last life taken in its entirety, whatever his motivating consciousness -- he will be born under the appropriate constellation. Every child, every new life, insists on a specific moment for birth before its entry. It wants to be born at a specific moment, only at this moment does it wish to be conceived. His desire and that moment are interdependent.

As I have told you, the water of the ocean is subject to certain influences. But all life is created out of water; without water, no life is possible. So in ancient Greece, seers used to say that only from water is life born, that water is life. Ancient Indian, Chinese and other mythologies also say this. Today scientists who believe in evolution also say that life was born in water, that perhaps the first life on the planet lived in the water. This was the first form of life, and then out of this, man eventually evolved.

Water is the most mysterious element of all.

Whatever influences from the stars reach man from the universe, from space, reach him through the medium of water. Having once affected the water in a man's body, any

radiation can gain entrance into him. Much work is being done with water, and many mysteries concerning water are coming to man's attention.

The biggest mystery about water which has come to the attention of scientists in the last ten years is that water possesses a lot of sensitivity. Whatever influences are active from any direction in life are first felt by water. The water in us is the first thing to be affected. Once the water in us is influenced, then it will be very difficult for us to avoid being influenced.

You will be surprised to learn that when the child swims in the mother's womb, he swims just as if he were in the ocean. The water in which the child swims in the mother's womb possesses the same proportion of salt as is present in the ocean. Whatever influences reach the child from the mother's body do not reach him directly; between the mother and the child growing in her womb there is no direct connection. Water is the mediator. Whatever influences reach the child from the mother do so through the medium of water; there is no direct relationship. Then throughout our lives the water in our bodies behaves just as the water in the sea.

Fish in the ocean have been much studied. There are fish which come onto the seashore and lay their eggs when the tides of the ocean are ebbing, when the sea is receding. Riding with the waves, the fish come onto the sand, lay their eggs, and return with the ocean waves. At a fixed time the ocean waves return. By then the eggs will have burst and the spawn will have come out. Then the incoming waves will take the spawn back out to sea.

Scientists who studied these fish were very surprised, because the fish always come to lay their eggs at the time when the tide is ebbing. If they were to lay their eggs while the tide is rising then the eggs would be washed away in the flood. They lay their eggs when the tide is going down, and withdraw for a little time in the recess of the waves. The waves do not wash a second time over the place they lay their eggs, otherwise the waves would wash the eggs away.

Scientists are very puzzled as to how these fish know when the tide will go down -- when the time of the ebb-tide has arrived. If there were even the slightest mistake in timing, the eggs would be washed away. But they have never made a mistake in hundreds of thousands of years. If they had made an error they would have disappeared as a species. But they have never made any error. What equipment do these fish possess by which they can know about the tides? What sense organ do they possess that tells them when the tide will ebb? A hundred thousand fish will be gathered together at one time over the entire seashore.... There must be some code, some informative mechanism in the possession of these fish. A hundred thousand fish will come from thousands of miles away to lay their eggs on the ocean beach -- and all at the same time.

Those who study the phenomenon say that besides the moon there can be no other source. The moon is the source of the fish's intuition, nothing else. It is from intuition that the fish know when the tide is ebbing and when the tide is rising. The impact of the moon is the only way they have of knowing the tides.

There is another possibility. It has been conjectured that these fish might somehow be informed by the waves of the sea. So scientists put them in a place where there are no ocean waves: in water, in an unlit room. But the results turned out to be very surprising. The fish were enveloped in darkness, the moon was not in view. No light was in view at all, but when the moon reached the exact point at which the fish in the ocean would go

and lay their eggs on the shore, at just exactly the same moment the fish in the laboratory laid their eggs. What does this fact show? That it is not a question of the ocean waves.

Someone may say that the race begins only when the fish receive signals from each other, but this hypothesis cannot stand either. Scientists have witnessed the fish when they were isolated from each other. They have tried to disturb the brains of these fish in every way. They have placed the fish in darkness for twenty-four hours so that the fish do not know when it is morning and when it is night. They have observed these fish after placing them under a bright light for twenty-four hours so that the fish would not know when it is day. They have observed them after setting up an artificial moon, and daily they either lessened or increased its brilliance. But these fish could not be fooled. When the authentic moon came to the right point, at that moment only did the fish lay their eggs. Wherever they were, they would lay their eggs at that moment.

A hundred thousand birds every year fly hundreds and hundreds of miles. The winter is on its way, and soon snow will fall, so the birds begin fly away from the areas where snow will fall. They will stop at a place thousands of miles away. To reach their winter encampment, two months are required. These birds depart exactly one month before the coming of snow. At the time of departure snow has not yet begun to fall, but after exactly a month it will fall. How do these birds calculate the date on which snow will fall? Our weathermen, who have the most elaborate observatories, cannot come up with such exact information. I have heard that some weathermen first ask astrologers sitting on the roadside, "What do you think -- will it rain today or not?"

The arrangements which man has made seem juvenile. Birds know a month and a half or two months before snow falls. After thousands of experiments it has been observed that the day birds fly is fixed for every type of bird. Every year the date changes, because there is no fixed date for snow to fall. But it is certain that every bird will fly away one month before snow falls. If snow is to fall ten days later than the previous year, then they will fly ten days later. If snow falls ten days earlier, they will fly ten days earlier. If the date of the first snowfall is uncertain, then how are these birds informed?

In Japan there is a bird which will evacuate a town twenty-four hours before an earthquake occurs. It is just an ordinary town bird -- in every town there are many of them -- but twenty-four hours before an earthquake these birds will evacuate the town. At present, scientists are unable to predict whether an earthquake is coming, even two hours beforehand. Two hours before they are still uncertain, they are still unsure. There is only a probability, a possibility, that an earthquake can happen. But in Japan, people know twenty-four hours in advance that an earthquake is coming. From whichever town this bird flies away, the people of that town know that now there is only twenty-four hours' time. This bird has retreated; not a single one of that species remains in the town. How does this bird become informed?

For ten years now, scientists have been saying something new -- that every organism possesses an internal sense organ which feels the outside world. Perhaps man too possesses it, but has lost it through depending on his intellect. Man is the only living being in the world who has, through intelligence, lost many things which he once had. Through the same creative intelligence he has also gained many things he did not have, but at a great loss. What he had he has lost, what he did not have he has invented. But even miniature organisms possess an inner source of feeling. And now scientific data is

becoming available which proves that such an inner source exists. This discovery of an inner source makes us aware that nothing alive on this earth is isolated or separate. Everything is joined to the cosmos. If anything happens anywhere its results will begin to be felt here.

I was talking about Paracelsus.... Present-day physicians are also arriving at the conclusion that when spots emerge and grow on the sun, illness on the earth increases, and that when sunspots decrease, illness on the earth also decreases. We will never get rid of disease on earth while sunspots last. Every eleven years there is great turmoil on the sun and huge explosions take place. When explosions and turmoil occur on the sun, at that time wars and disturbances occur on earth. The wars that take place on earth follow a ten-year sequence. Epidemics also follow a ten or eleven-year sequence. Revolutions also follow approximately a ten or eleven-year sequence.

Once you have the idea that we are not separate or isolated but joined together in an organic way, then it will be easy to understand astrology. This is why I am explaining all this to you.

Some men have thought, and even now think, that astrology is superstition, blind faith. To a great extent this seems to be true. Those things that it is difficult to find a scientific explanation for seem to us to be based only on blind faith. But astrology is very scientific. The meaning of science is the investigation of the relationship between cause and effect. Astrology says that whatever happens on this earth is not uncaused. However, we may not be aware of the causes. Astrology says that the shape which the future will take cannot be isolated from the past but must be joined to it: what you will be tomorrow will be joined to what you are today; what you were until today is joined to what you will be tomorrow.

Astrology is a very scientific way of thinking. It says that the future will emerge only out of the past: your today has emerged from your yesterday; your tomorrow will emerge from your today. Astrology also says that whatever will happen tomorrow is in some subtle way present even today. Now try to understand a little about this.

Three days before his assassination, Abraham Lincoln dreamt that he had been murdered and that his corpse was lying in a special room in the White House. He even noted the number of his room. At that point his sleep was broken, and when he woke up, he laughed. He said to his wife, "I dreamt that I was murdered and that my body was lying in such-and-such-number room, and in such-and-such wing of the White House" -- he was sleeping in that wing of the White House. "You stood at my head, and such-and-such people were standing all around."

It was a joke, a laughing matter to him. Lincoln and his wife went back to sleep. Three days later Lincoln's assassination took place. Three days later his body was lying in that number room, in that very place, and in that sequence people were standing around his body.

If what was to occur three days later had not in some fashion already occurred, then how could such a dream have taken place? How could the dream resemble, in such detail, what actually took place? Such a glimpse is given in a dream only if in some way it is already implied in the present moment. Then only can we get a glimpse of what will take place in the future.

If we open the window of the present, then we will be able to see that the future is just outside this window. It is the thesis of astrology that the future is simply our

ignorance -- so, it is "the future." If we were to see, then the future would not be a "happening" for us -- we would know it is already present here and now.

There is reference to one event in Mahavira's life, over which there has been much dispute. Because of this dispute, a group of his disciples broke away from him, in his very presence. Because of this dispute, five hundred of Mahavira's munis created a separate order. Mahavira used to say that whatever is happening has in some sense already happened: if you are walking, then in a sense you have already arrived at the destination; if you are growing old, then in a sense you have already grown old. Mahavira used to say that whatever is happening, whatever is in process, has already occurred.

One senior disciple of Mahavira lived far away from him during the monsoon. He was sick, so he asked a junior disciple who was present to spread out a mat for him. The junior disciple began to spread out the mat. He had just unfolded the twisted, rolled-up mat a little when the senior disciple remembered Mahavira's saying. He said, "Stop! Mahavira says that what is happening has already happened." The mat was in the process of being rolled out but it was not yet opened. It had suddenly occurred to him that Mahavira had said a very wrong thing. The mat was half-opened, but in what sense was it already opened?

He left the mat there. After the monsoon he went to Mahavira and said, "You are mistaken when you say that what is happening has already happened, because right now the mat is lying half-opened. It was being opened, but it has not been opened. So I have come to prove that your saying is wrong." Mahavira told him that he had not understood the saying. This disciple must have had a very childish mind; otherwise he would not have come with such talk. Mahavira said, "You have stopped the process. It was happening but you interrupted it. The mat which you prevented from unfolding was already actualizing itself in the very unfolding process. It had, in fact, already been actualized. You only saw the mat in the process of unfolding, but one more process was going on, and that is what has already happened. So, for how long will your mat remain folded? It is becoming opened, and will open. You go back."

When the disciple returned he saw that a man had opened the mat and was lying on it, resting. This man had upset everything; he had destroyed the whole thesis of the disciple!

When Mahavira used to say that whatever is happening has already happened, he was saying that whatever is happening is the present, whatever may be is the future. The bud which is coming into blossom somewhere has already blossomed, so it will blossom, it will become a flower. Right now the bud is in the process of flowering, right now it is only a bud. But if it is in the process of flowering, then it will flower. Its having flowered has also in a sense already occurred somewhere.

Now we should look at this from another angle. It will be a little difficult. We always look from the viewpoint of the past. The bud is blossoming, but our thinking is generally past-oriented -- bound to the past. We say that the bud is blossoming, that it is becoming a flower, that the bud will become a flower. But the reverse may be the case. For instance, if I push you from behind, I am making you go forward. But it may also be that someone is pulling you from ahead. The motion can be in both directions. I am pushing you from behind and you are going ahead. It may be that someone pulls you from ahead, but that no one is pushing you from behind. In this case too you will go ahead.

Astrology recognizes the incompleteness of the view that the past gives the impetus and that the future happens as a result. If one views a phenomenon in its totality, one sees that the past is providing the impetus, but also that the future is exercising a pull, an attraction. The bud becoming a flower is not all that is happening. The flower is calling out to the bud to become a flower; it is exercising a pull. The past is behind; the future is ahead. Now, in the present moment, there is a bud. The entire past is pushing the bud to become a flower and the entire future is calling on the bud to become a flower.

Under pressure from both directions, past and future, the bud will become a flower. If there were no future, then the past by itself would not be able to create the flower, because the future must provide space for the bud to become a flower. In the future a place, a space, is necessary. If the future provides a place, only then will the bud be able to flower. If there were no future, then no matter how much the past tried, no matter how much it pushed you, it would be in vain. No matter how much I push you from behind, if there is a wall in front I cannot make you go ahead. Space is needed to go ahead. If I push you and the space ahead accepts you with the invitation, "Come! be my guest," then only can my pushing be significant. For my pushing, a space in the future is needed. The past does the work; the future gives space.

It is the view of astrology that looking from the standpoint of the past alone is insufficient and only partially scientific.

The future is calling all the time, drawing us all the time. We do not know, we are not aware. This is the weakness of our eyes, this is our shortsightedness -- we cannot see very far. About tomorrow nothing is revealed to us.

If you look at Krishnamurti's kundali some time, you will be surprised. If Annie Besant or Leadbeater had cared to look at Krishnamurti's birth chart then they would have seen that to work with Krishnamurti was wrong because his birth chart clearly shows that to whichever organization Krishnamurti belongs, he will be its destroyer. It shows that whichever organization he belongs to, he will bring about its disintegration; whichever organization he joins, it will die. But Annie Besant was not ready to accept this. No one could think such a thing -- but this is the way it happened.

The Theosophical movement tried to groom Krishnamurti as its leader. Theosophy made such an effort on Krishnamurti's behalf that the movement died forever. Annie Besant created a big organization called the Star of the East, just for Krishnamurti. Then one day, after having inspired the organization, Krishnamurti separated himself from it. Annie Besant had surrendered her entire life in order to put the organization on its feet, and destroyed herself over it. But for this Krishnamurti cannot be blamed. The star under whose influence he was born clearly announced that he would be a destructive and disruptive force within any organization.

The future is not utterly uncertain. Our knowledge is uncertain; our ignorance is weighty. Nothing of the future seems to be revealed to us. We are blind; nothing at all of the future is revealed to us. Because nothing seems to be revealed to us, we say it is uncertain. But something of the future is revealed to us -- and astrology is not merely the study of what the stars and planets say or of calculating their significance. This is only one dimension of astrology.

Then there are other dimensions of knowing the future too. People have lines on the palms of their hands, people have lines on their foreheads, people have lines on the soles of their feet -- but this too is superficial.

In the human body there are hidden chakras. Every chakra has its own unique sensation. Every chakra vibrates in its own unique fashion, at its own frequency, all the time. There are ways to check what these are. Human beings have concealed within them the mental impressions or seeds of the past.

Ron Hubbard has brought a new word, a new science, to the West. For the East it is ancient. The name of this science is time track. Hubbard thinks that in whatever form a man has lived -- whether as man or beast, whether as plant or stone... in whatever form he has lived throughout his infinite span of lives, this entire stream of memories is still contained within him. This stream can be exposed, and a man can even be made to re-experience those memories.

In all of Hubbard's research, this is the most valuable discovery. About time track Hubbard has said that within man there are engrams. On the one hand, we possess a memory by which we recall what happened yesterday and what happened the day before. This is our "working" memory, this is our everyday memory. Just as every shopkeeper or office worker keeps a daily register, this is our working memory. It becomes useless every day. In fact, it does not exist -- it is not at all permanent. This is the working memory through which we do our work every day, and then every day we throw it out.

But even deeper than this is a memory which is not merely for getting the work done -- which is our life, which sums up our entire experience, the accumulated essence of our experience throughout countless lives on the path. This, Hubbard has called engram -- it has become ingrained within us. It lies in its entirety, locked deep within, just as if a tape is kept locked in your pocket. It can be opened, and when it is opened, it becomes what Mahavira used to call race memory. Hubbard calls it time track -- it makes it possible for you to go back in time. When it is opened the experience is not that you are remembering; it is not as though you are remembering, you relive the experience.

Now it is unlocked. When the time track is unlocked, you do not feel "I am remembering" -- no. You relive it. Try to understand. If your time track is unlocked, it will not be difficult. In fact, without it astrology is incomplete. The deepest realization of astrology is that your past must be unlocked -- because if you become aware of your entire past, then you will be aware of your entire future, because your future will emerge out of your past.

Without knowing your past you cannot know your future, because your future will be the child of your past, your future will be born out of your past. So first it is necessary that your entire memory track be exposed to view. If your memory track is unlocked -- and for this there are techniques and methods -- then if you think that you will remember how you were a six-year-old child and your father slapped you, you are incorrect. You will not remember how you were when you were six years old, you will relive it.

You will relive the event. Also, at the time you are reliving it, if I ask, "What is your name?" you will reply "Junior," not "William Smith Junior." A six-year-old child will be replying. You will be reliving the event at this time; you will not be remembering. William Smith Junior is not remembering when he was six years old, no, William Smith Junior has become six years old. Now he will answer "Junior"; whatever reply he gives will be the reply of a six-year-old child.

If you are brought back to a past life and you remember that you were a lion, then if you are allowed to remain at this point you will begin to roar just like a lion. You will not speak like a man. It is possible you will even attack someone with your fingers and nails.

If you remember that you were a stone and someone asks you a question then you will remain completely silent. You will not be able to speak; you will remain like a stone.

Hubbard has helped thousands of people. For instance a man who cannot speak -- Hubbard would say that this man has been blocked by some childhood memory and cannot go ahead. Then he would take him back along his time track and break open his engram of the time when he was six years old, or the point at which his growth became blocked and he could not proceed. As he returns to this point, the influence of this childhood memory will disperse. Then this man will come back to again being thirty years old. The twenty-four years' difference will be put aside. The surprising thing is that thousands of medicines might not help the man to speak, but by going back along the time track and then returning, he becomes able to.

Many illnesses come to you only because of this time track. Many illnesses fit into this category -- for instance, hay fever or asthma. For the patient who suffers from hay fever, there exists a fixed date: every year at the same date, at the same time, his hay fever returns. So there can be no remedy for hay fever. Why? -- because hay fever is not actually a bodily illness, it is a time track illness. Somewhere a memory has been fixed, somewhere a memory has been blocked.

For instance, a man may remember the twelfth of a month during the rainy season. When the twelfth comes, when the rainy season comes, the man is getting ready; he is already afraid of what will happen. You will be surprised that the hay fever which will now attack him is just something he is reliving -- it is not real hay fever at all. He is only reliving what occurred on the twelfth, the previous year. If you give him any treatment now, you will only be putting him in trouble. Treatment is of no use because he is not the same man who existed a year ago and who at that time could have been treated. You are unnecessarily throwing away medicine -- because it is going into the man who exists now, not into the man who was sick a year ago. There is no connection between the two, no relationship. Every medicine will fail, every medicine will only increase his hay fever, so he will say that nothing is happening. He is again getting ready to repeat what happened the previous year.

Seventy percent of our illnesses have happened through the time track -- they have been caught and grasped so tightly that again and again we relive them.

Astrology is not merely the study of the stars, although it includes that. We will talk about this. Besides the study of the stars, there are other, separate dimensions by which astrology tries to probe man's future, by which it can get hold of the future.

To become aware of the future, it is necessary to become aware of the past. To be aware of the past, it is necessary to read the inscriptions traced on your body and on your mind. On your body there are inscriptions and on your mind there are also inscriptions. From the time astrology became obsessed with these bodily inscriptions it could not go very deep, because these bodily inscriptions are very superficial.

If your mind undergoes a change, then the lines on your palm will immediately change. If under hypnosis you are assured that after fifteen days you will die, and if every day for fifteen days you are made unconscious and assured in your unconscious state that after fifteen days you will die whether you like it or not, then by the fifteenth day your age line will be broken. A gap will have appeared in your age line; the body will accept the notion that death is on its way.

The lines traced on the body are a very superficial phenomenon. Deep within is the mind. The mind with which you are familiar, however, does not exist deep down; it is superficial. Deep down there is a mind which you do not know at all. The centers that exist deep within this body alone, which Yoga calls chakras, are the accumulated forms of many lives. One who knows can, by placing his hand on a particular chakra, discover how active it is. By touching your seven chakras, it can be known whether you have ever experienced them or not.

I have experimented with the chakras of hundreds of people, and I have been surprised to find that at the most one or two -- and only rarely three -- chakras have begun to be activated; generally, they remain dormant. You have never used them, but they are your past. If a man who has experienced them comes to me and I can see that all his seven chakras are in motion, then it can be said that this is his last birth. Then there will be no next birth, because if all seven chakras are in motion, then there is no possibility of a next life. This life will be nirvana, this life will be liberation.

If anyone came to Mahavira, he made it his concern to discover how many chakras were active in him -- how much work must be done with him, what his possibilities were, when and whether his labor would bear any fruit or not, and how many more births he would need.

Astrology is an attempt to probe the future by many, many paths. Among these -- the most commonly used path -- is the study of how the planets and stars influence man. For this, more scientific evidence is becoming available every day. This much has been decided -- that life is affected and cannot avoid being affected by these influences. Only the second part remains difficult to determine -- whether each person as an individual is also affected. It worries scientists a little whether each person is affected individually -- whether the three or four billion men on this earth are each affected as individuals. But they must realize that this is so.

Why are they so troubled? Nature can give each man a thumb that is uniquely his, that is individual and unrepeated. Nature can keep such a subtle account that it gives to each man a thumb which is uniquely his and a thumb print which can never belong to anyone else, neither now nor in the future. Several billion people may have lived on the earth, several billion people may live in the future on the earth, but my thumb print will not be repeated. You may be surprised to learn that in the case of twins born out of one egg, which I have spoken about, even their thumb prints will differ from one another.

If nature can bestow so much individuality on each man with regard to a worthless thing like a thumb -- a thing which is of no special value and which seems to fulfill no special purpose -- if nature can even give a thumb a uniqueness, then can't it give each man a unique life and a unique spirit? There seems to be no reason why not. But science moves in slow motion -- and it is good! For science, slow motion is good. Until a fact has been completely proved, it is not good to move forward even an inch. But prophets can take a leap. That which will happen a thousand or even a hundred thousand years later, they can declare right now.

Science moves forward inch by inch. It sees only facts -- facts, that can be experimented upon. Dreaming is of no use to science -- but prophets can discover truth even in dreams. For them, even the future is just the expanded present.

Astrology is basically the investigation of the future. And science is basically the investigation of the past and the present. Science is the investigation of what is today and

what is its cause. Astrology is the investigation of what tomorrow will be and what will be its consequences. Between the two there is a huge gap. But every day science experiences new things, and theories to which it has become attached can never be proved absolutely correct -- they only seem correct.

As I have said, science has only recently accepted that every man is born with built-in individuality. For a long time it has been reluctant to accept the validity of this idea. But astrology has always been saying this. Just try to understand....

For instance a seed, a mango seed: when we sow the mango seed there must be contained within it some sort of built-in program, there must be a blueprint. If this were not so the seed would be helpless. It neither takes advice from a specialist nor does it study at a university. How then can a mango tree develop out of this seed? Still, it produces the mango tree leaf, it bears the mango fruit. In the stone-like seed there must be concealed a complete program. If not, without such a program what can the seed do? Everything must be present within it. Whatever the tree will be must somehow be concealed within the seed. It is not visible to us. We can smash it and dissect it, and still it will not be visible. But it must be there somehow, otherwise a neem tree might possibly emerge from the mango seed...!

It seems that there is never a mistake. Only a mango tree emerges; everything is repeated correctly. In this tiny seed is stored all the information which relates to what the seed must do. How it must sprout, what type of leaf, how many branches to produce, how big a tree to become, for how long it will grow, how tall it will grow -- all this must be hidden within the seed. How many fruits, how sweet, whether they will ripen or not -- all this must be concealed within the seed. If all this is concealed within a mango seed, then when you come into your mother's womb will there be nothing latent in your seed?

Now scientists agree that even at this stage the color of your eyes must lie concealed, that the color of your hair must lie concealed, that the height of your body must lie concealed, that the possibilities of health and ill health must lie concealed, and that even your I.Q. must lie concealed -- because without it how will you develop, and by what means? You must have a program that is built in advance. How will certain bones join together as a hand, others as a foot? One bone will begin to see, another bone will begin to hear. How can all this be?

Scientists used to say that it is just coincidence. But the word coincidence seems very unscientific. Coincidence means chance. By chance a foot may begin to see and a hand to hear. But there does not seem to be much coincidence; everything seems to be in order, prearranged.

Astrology says a more scientific thing. It says that everything is available within the seed. Astrology says that if we can study the seed, if we can discover the language of the seed, if we can decode this language -- if we can ask the seed, "What is your intention?" -- then we will be able to draw up the complete blueprint of a human being too. Scientists have already begun to draw up such blueprints for plants. Up to now we have considered astrology to be superstition, a matter of blind faith. But if science draws up such blueprints, then it will in fact become astrology -- and science has certainly begun to draw up such blueprints.

Astrology declares that if by divine grace we come to know the whole, then the future as such will not exist at all. But because we do not know the whole -- only a little fragment -- what we do not know becomes "the future." We are obliged to say, "Perhaps

it may be like this," because much is unknown to us. If the whole were to be known then we could say, "It will be like this" -- and it will be exactly so.

If everything is latent within the human seed, then it is only a matter of studying the seed. What I am talking about today must in some form have existed in my seed as a potentiality; otherwise, how can I talk about all this? If some day it becomes possible to observe a human seed, then after observing my seed, a blueprint could be drawn up indicating what I will say in this life, what I will become, what I will not become, what I will make of myself, what I will not make of myself, what will happen. All this could be forecast. It will not be surprising when tomorrow, if not today, we have the capacity to peep into the human seed. The first steps have already been taken in this direction.

Birth charts and horoscopes are only for probing into all these matters. For thousands of years we have tried, when a child is born, to find out what will happen to him. If we could get some estimate, then perhaps we could make some arrangements, perhaps we could increase the child's opportunities. Then whatever is to happen, we could become accepting of it.

Mulla Nasruddin declared towards the end of his life that he had always been miserable, but that suddenly one day he had become happy. The entire population of the village was struck with wonder that a man who had always been depressed, who always used to see the dark side of things, should suddenly have become cheerful. He was a man who had always been pessimistic, who always used to look for thorns.

Once there was an excellent crop in Nasruddin's garden. There were so many apples that the trees were overloaded. In the neighborhood, one man inquired whether Nasruddin could now possibly have any complaint. He said, "This time the crop is such that it will rain gold. What do you think, Nasruddin?"

Nasruddin, in great sorrow said, "Everything is okay, but where will I get rotten apples to feed the animals?" This man remains miserable: "Where will I get rotten apples to feed the animals...!" All the apples were good, none were rotten -- this was his difficulty.

This man suddenly one day became happy, and so the people of the village were curious. They asked, "You are happy, Nasruddin? Has the kingdom become yours?"

Nasruddin said, "I have learned to cooperate with the inevitable. After many years of struggling, I have realized something. Now I have decided that what must be, must be. Now I cooperate with the inevitable, so now there is no reason to be miserable. Now I am happy."

Astrology investigates many things. To whatever is inevitable, it lends a cooperative hand. Whatever is to be, it does not madly struggle against. Whatever is not to be, it does not demand, does not reach out towards.

Astrology was a means for making man religious -- for bringing him to suchness, for bringing him to an ultimate acceptance. It has many dimensions, it has many aspects. We will gradually discuss each dimension. For today, just this much -- that the universe is a living body, an organic unit. In it nothing is isolated, all is joined together. Whatever is far away is joined to that which is near -- nothing is separate.

So no one should misunderstand this. No one is an isolated island, no one is aloof. Each is joined to the whole, and each one is all the time affecting the other and being affected by the other. Even when you pass by a stone lying on the road, it is throwing its

vibrations in your direction. The flowers too are throwing out their vibrations. And you are not just passing by, you too are throwing out your vibrations.

I have said that we are affected by the moon and the stars. I also wish to say that the moon and the stars are affected by us, because influence comes from both directions. Whenever a man like Buddha is born on the earth, the moon may not realize that it is because of him that storms are not arising on its surface -- that because of Buddha, storms are subsiding. The moon is affected and the sun is also moved. When spots occur on the sun and storms arise, disease spreads throughout the earth.

When a person like Buddha is born on the earth and a current of peace is flowing, and the pillar of consciousness grows strong, and the deep beauty of meditation moves over the earth, then too a storm spreads throughout the sun -- a storm of peace, bliss and consciousness -- because all is joined together.

A tiny blade of grass has an impact on the sun, and the sun has its impact on the blade of grass. The blade of grass is not so tiny that the sun can say, "I do not care about you," nor is the sun so big that it can say, "What can this blade of grass do for me?" Life is joined together. Here nothing is big or small; everything is one organic unity.

Life is a whole. If you can perceive this wholeness, only then will you understand astrology; otherwise you will not. Astrology is an aspect of spirituality, a dimension of spirituality. It is the science of wholeness, unity, nonduality.

Hidden Mysteries
Chapter #6
Chapter title: Astrology: A Door to Religiousness
10 July 1971 pm in Woodlands, Bombay, India

It is necessary that some matters be understood. First, it is necessary to know that from a scientific point of view the whole solar family is born out of the sun. The moon, Mars, Jupiter, and the rest of the planets, including this earth, are all organic parts of the sun. Slowly, life on earth came into being -- from plants to man. Man is an organic part of the earth; the earth is an organic part of the sun. It is like a mother who has a daughter, who in turn also has a daughter, and in all three of them the same blood flows. Their bodies are made up of similar cells. The scientists use a word, empathy, meaning shared sensitivity. Those things that are born from the same source have a sort of shared inner experience.

Out of the sun the earth is born, and out of the earth our bodies are born, and far away the sun is our great grandparent. Whatsoever happens on the sun creates a vibration in every cell of our bodies. It must be that way because our cells are all born out of the sun. The sun appears to be a great distance away but it is not so far. In every element of our blood and in every particle of our bones, live the atoms of the sun. We are part of the sun, so it is no wonder that in our lives we are influenced by the sun. There is a sort of empathy between the sun and ourselves. If we understand this empathy properly, we shall enter into one dimension of astrology.

Some experiments on empathy can be conducted when two children born of the some egg are placed in separate rooms. During the last fifty years many of these kind of

experiments have been conducted. The twins were put into separate rooms, a bell was rung, and the children told to write or draw whatsoever they first thought of when the bell was rung. This was repeated twenty times, and it was observed with great wonder that ninety percent of the pictures drawn by the twins were similar. The thought stream produced in one child on the ringing of the bell, and the word or picture brought about by that thought, would be the same as in the other twin.

This similarity of experience is described by scientists as empathy. There is so much similarity between twins that they even speak alike. Within the bodies of two such children there is an inner communication or dialogue which flows through some unknown channels.

Between the sun and the earth also there are communication bridges like this, and every moment messages are being passed across these bridges. And similarly, communication bridges exist between the earth and man. So there is a continuous communication between man, the earth and the sun. But that communication is very mysterious; it is inner and subtle. Let us understand something about this also.

There is a research center in America known as the Tree Ring Research Center. If you cut down a tree you will find a number of rings or circles drawn across the cut surface. The beautiful decorative designs in the grain of wooden furniture are due to these circles. This research center has been working for the last fifty years on the formation of these rings.

Professor Douglas, the center's director, who has spent a major part of his life studying them, has discovered a number of facts. Ordinarily, all of us know that the age of the tree can be calculated from the number of these circles. Every year one new ring is born; one new layer is made within the tree every year. If the tree is fifty years old, if it has seen fifty autumns, then there are fifty rings formed inside the tree. But it is surprising to know that these rings also indicate what sort of seasons there were in a particular year. If the seasons were more hot or wetter than usual, the ring formation is broader. If the seasons were cold and dry, the ring is not so wide. It is possible to know when there were strong rains, when there was drought and when the seasons were very cold. If Buddha said that there was good rainfall in a particular year, the bodhi tree under which he sat would confirm the truth of it. Buddha might have made a mistake, but the tree could not. The tree ring will be wider or thinner, indicating the type of season that particular year.

While conducting his research, Professor Douglas reached still another conclusion which was far beyond anything he could have anticipated. He observed that the rings are wider every eleventh year -- and every eleventh year there is maximum nuclear activity on the sun, the sun becomes more active. It is as if it has a periodic rhythm and its radioactivity is at a maximum then. During such a year a tree makes a wider ring -- not in one forest or in one place or country, but all over the earth all trees behave similarly in order to protect themselves from the intensified radioactivity. To protect itself from the excessive power that is released by the sun, the tree grows a thicker skin every eleventh year.

Due to this phenomenon, a new phrase, "climate of the earth," has been coined by scientists. The seasons are different at different places: somewhere it is raining, somewhere it is extremely cold and somewhere it is very hot. But with regard to this eleventh year, this new term, "climate of the earth" was coined by Professor Douglas.

Due to the sun's radioactivity every eleventh year, there is a similarity of experience all over the earth. We might not notice it, but the trees do. There is a gradual decrease in the width of the tree rings that are formed after the eleventh year, and after five years there is again a gradual increasing in width up to the eleventh year.

If the trees are so sensitive that they can carefully record an event happening on the sun, then isn't it possible that in the mind of man also there might be some layer indicative of the sun's activity? Isn't it possible that man's body might have a subtle sensitivity to the sun's activity? Isn't it possible that in some way rings take shape deep within the human personality? Until now scientists have not been able to find such records in man's body, but it doesn't seem possible that man's body wouldn't record such activity.

Astrology is an investigation into the possibility that changes in the universe have also been recorded in man. But it is not as easy to investigate the body of man because it cannot be cut open like a tree. To cut open a human being is a very delicate and dangerous affair. And because man has a mind, it is not the body which registers events in this way, but the mind. The tree has no mind, and so its body has to register the events.

One more point is also worth noting.... Just as there are radio-active storms on the sun every eleventh year, similarly, there is another periodic rhythm of ninety years on the sun. This has only come to light recently, but it is a scientific fact and it is as surprising as the periodic rhythm occurring each eleven years. Astrologers do not mention anything about this, but I am telling you to make it easier for you to understand astrology in a scientific manner. There is a cycle of ninety years which has been experienced, and its story is quite amazing.

Four thousand years ago, an Egyptian pharaoh told his scientists to keep a record of how often the water in the River Nile increases or decreases and by how much. The River Nile is the only river in the world with a biography four thousand years old. A record has been kept of when the water level in the river increased or decreased by even one inch. This record runs from the time of the pharaohs, four thousand years ago, until today.

"Pharaoh" is the name given to an Egyptian emperor and means the sun in the Egyptian language. There was a belief in Egypt that a continuous dialogue existed between the sun and the River Nile. The pharaohs, who were devotees of the sun, declared that a complete record of the Nile should be kept. They said, "We know nothing about the sun at present, but some day we will, and this record will be useful."

So everything about the River Nile for four thousand years has been recorded: the increase in the water level, when there were floods and when there were none.... And one Egyptian scholar, Tasman, compiled its history. Some things that were not known in the times of the pharaohs are now known and everything that has happened in the Nile has been compared with events on the sun. A ninety-year rhythm has been clearly indicated to relate to happenings on the sun. These events are quite similar to what we call birth and death.

Understand it this way: the sun grows for forty-five years and then begins to decline in age for forty-five years. For forty-five years the energy flow within the sun increases towards a peak of youth. After forty-five years there is a receding flow of energy, as within a human being. After ninety years the sun becomes very old. During the later forty-five years, the earth is struck with earthquakes. Earthquakes are related to this ninety-year cycle. At the end of the ninetieth year, the sun again becomes youthful.

This is a very important cyclical occurrence. There are such immense changes happening on the sun that it is natural for the earth also to be shaken. When a body as huge as the earth becomes upset by earthquakes because of changes on the sun, how can the small body of a man remain unaffected? This is the question astrologers have been asking. They say it is impossible for the body of man to remain unaffected. Children that are born during those forty-five years when the sun is growing in youth are wonderfully healthy. But those children that are born during the forty-five years when the sun is growing old cannot be in sound health.

The condition of children born during the period when the sun is on the downward path is like that of a ship that has to travel east when the winds are blowing west -- a great deal of physical effort is needed to move the oars. The sails do not work so the helmsman has to work harder. It is like swimming against the current. The sun is the vital energy source for the whole solar family. When it is old, whosoever happens to be young has to swim against the current. He has to undergo a great strain.

When the sun is in its youthful period, the entire solar family is filled with energy and is moving toward its peak. Whosoever is born then is in a ship that is sailing in the direction of the wind. No effort is necessary. Neither the oars nor the rudder have to be moved: the sails have only to be opened and the ship is moved by the winds. During this period there is a minimum of disease prevalent on the earth. When the sun is growing old there are the maximum number of diseases.

The River Nile's historical record of four thousand years shows that there is an increase of water flowing in it during the forty-five years when the sun is in its youth. When the sun is becoming old, the water level in the Nile drops. It also becomes weaker and older then.

Man is not separate from this world, he is one united whole with it.

Not even the best watches tell the time accurately. It takes twenty-three hours and fifty-six minutes for the earth to make one revolution around its axis. On the basis of this time period we have devised a day of twenty-four hours. Our man-made watches may falter, but so far the earth has not been known to have ever taken one second more or less in completing a revolution. We did not have any totally accurate means to study this phenomenon, so we only made rough estimates. But when the sun's cycle of ninety years is completed, and when the sun readjusts for a new cycle, the timing of the clocks on the earth is disturbed.

At the time when the sun experiences increased radioactivity, during its eleven-year cycle, our clocks falter. Whenever the earth comes under the influence of such external forces its inner rhythm is disturbed. New cosmic influences like a star, a meteor, or a comet passing near the earth also disturbs it. On a cosmic scale, things very far away in the sky are really very near, because everything is interconnected in an invisible way. However, the ability of our language to express this phenomenon is very weak, because when we say that a star has come a little nearer to our sun, we think about this in the ordinary sense of one person coming nearer to another. However, the distances are very great. But even a slight change in the distances between cosmic objects and the axis of the earth will be disturbed -- although we may not even be aware of this. To disturb the earth, a great force is required. Even for a one-inch deviation on the earth, powerful cosmic bodies are required to pass near its orbit.

When these great cosmic bodies pass near the earth, they also pass near us. When the earth is shaken, it is not possible that the trees that grow on it are not shaken. It is not possible that the human being living and walking on it is not shaken. But the shaking is very minute, and so far we have not had any instruments to measure it. But now we have such sensitive electronic instruments that a vibration of a thousandth of a second's duration can also be measured. But the vibration of the human being still cannot be measured. So far we have not yet made any instruments for measuring that.

Man is a very limited creature -- and it is necessary for him to be that way, otherwise it would be difficult for him to live on the earth. If you were able to experience and know the influence of all the surrounding forces that act upon you twenty-four hours a day you would not be able to live. We are able to live because we do not know everything that is happening around us.

There is another law also. That law is that we come to know neither influences below a certain limit nor those above a certain limit. The range of our experience is limited. For example, suppose that we measure the body's temperature as being between ninety-eight degrees at the lowest point and one hundred and ten degrees at the highest point; then it shows that we are living within these twelve degrees.

If the temperature drops below ninety-eight degrees we will die, and if it shoots up above one hundred and ten degrees we will also die. But do you think that the is limited to a twelve degrees variation of temperature, that beyond this we will die? Man lives within the limited range of twelve degrees, and beyond this range, he will die. Man lives in a sort of balance. He has to fluctuate between ninety-eight and one hundred and ten degrees. Similarly, there are balances for everything.

I am speaking to you and you can hear. If I speak in a very low tone, a point will come where you will not be able to hear me. This you can understand, but you will not be able to imagine that there is a higher point of audibility beyond which you cannot hear. It will be difficult to imagine that a louder noise can also be inaudible.

Scientists say that we have a certain range of hearing, and that we cannot hear anything below or above it. All around us great thundering noises are occurring, but we can't hear them. If a star disintegrates or a new planet is born, tremendous thundering noises are created around the earth. If we were to hear them, then at that very moment we would become deaf. But because our ears cannot hear them, we are protected. We cannot hear below certain decibels and we cannot hear above certain decibels -- we can only hear within a certain range.

There are even limits to seeing. The senses of all human beings are operating within a particular range. For example, a dog is able to smell much more than you can. Its range of smell is wider, and what we are not able to smell, a dog can. What we are not able to hear, a horse can. A horse's sense of hearing and smelling is much sharper. From a distance of one and a half miles a horse can smell the approach of a lion. It will suddenly stop, and we will not understand why it has. Its sense of smell is very powerful. But if you had such a strong sense of smell that you could experience all the smells pervading your surroundings, you would go mad. A human being is closed within a sort of capsule -- he has boundaries.

When you switch on your radio, you can listen to many stations. Do you think that the music begins only when the radio is switched on? The radio waves of music and speech are continuously flowing in the air whether you switch on your radio or not. But

only when the radio is switched on can you hear them. In this very room, the radio waves of all the broadcasting stations of the world are flowing continuously, but only when you switch on your radio can you hear them. Those radio waves are there even when your radio is not switched on, but you cannot hear them.

In this world many sounds are passing by all around us. There is a great tumult. We are not able to hear it, but we cannot escape being affected by it. We are influenced by all these noises -- in every nerve, in every heartbeat, in every muscle. These noises are working in us unnoticed. The smells we are not able to recognize also affect us. If those smells bring with them some disease, you will catch the disease. Your awareness or recognition of it is not necessary for something to exist.

Astrology says that around us there are energy fields which go on influencing us continuously. As soon as a child is born, it is subject to all the influences of the world. In the language of science, we can describe birth as a process of exposure.

It is just as though we expose a film in a camera. You press the exposure button of a camera and within a split second the lens window opens and closes, and whatsoever was in front of that camera is immediately registered on the film. The film is exposed without affecting the previous exposure. The film has captured the image of the scene forever.

Similarly, when a child is conceived in the mother's womb, this is a first exposure for that child. On the day the child is born there is a second exposure. These two exposures are registered upon the sensitive mind of the child as if on a film. The world as it is at that moment is imprinted upon the child, and so there is an empathy in the child for the world as it is at that moment.

You will be surprised to know that ninety percent of children are born at night. Ordinarily -- in accordance with mathematical probability -- the percentage of births would be fifty-fifty for night and day. There can be a fluctuation of four to five percent here and there, but why should ninety percent be born during the night? Only ten percent of births, at the most, occur during the day. This cannot be without any reason. There are many reasons for this. Let me explain....

When a child is born at night, the first exposure of the world upon its mind is not of light, but of darkness. I am telling you this only by way of illustration, because the matter is really much deeper. Only by way of illustration am I telling you that the first impression upon the mind of the child is that of darkness. The sun is absent, its energy is absent. All around, the world is sleeping; nothing is actually awake. This is the first impact on the child.

If we ask Buddha or Mahavira about the reason for this, they will say that most souls take birth at night because they are sleeping when they are born. These souls cannot choose the moment of their birth. There are hundreds of other reasons, but this is important, that most people are asleep. They are in darkness and inactivity.

Whosoever is born after sunrise will be born with energy. After sunset, in the darkness of night, only sleeping beings can take birth. The birth that takes place at the time of the rising of the sun will be a birth under the influence of energy; the birth that takes place after sunset under the cover of darkness will be a birth under the influence of sleep. The exposure will be different for a film exposed at night and one exposed during light. It is necessary to understand this point about exposure more clearly, because astrology is very deeply related to it.

The scientists who are conducting research on this subject of birth exposure say that it is a happening of the utmost importance. That exposure will follow you throughout your life.

When a chicken is born to a hen, it immediately starts running after the hen. We say that it is running after the mother, but scientists say that this has nothing to do with the mother, that it is only a question of exposure and imprinting. Scientists have now conducted hundreds of experiments -- one experiment was on chickens about to be born. The chickens' beaks were emerging from the eggs, and just then the hen was removed from the scene, and a balloon was placed in front of the chickens instead. When the chickens opened their eyes they saw the balloon. You will be surprised to know that the chickens loved the balloon as if it was their mother.

Wherever that balloon moved in the air, they would run after it. They did not care for the mother, wherever she might be, but they became surprisingly sensitive towards the balloon. When the chickens became tired, they would go and sit beside the balloon. They would try to love the balloon, they would try to peck at the balloon -- not at the mother.

In this connection, a lot of work has been done by the scientist Konrad Lorenz. He says that the first moment of exposure is the most important. The child becomes intimately related to the mother, but because of the first exposure. It runs after the mother only because she was available to it first.

Now some more experiments are being conducted.... Those male children who are not brought up in the presence of the mother are not capable of loving any woman. There has been no proper exposure; the image of a woman has not been properly imprinted in such a child's mind. If homosexuality is increasing in the West, one fundamental reason is insufficient exposure to one of the parents. Heterosexual love, love between opposite sexes, is becoming less and less in the West, and love between members of the same sex is increasing. Although this is an unnatural happening, it is bound to be there.

The sexual attraction between a man and a woman is also conditioned in another manner. To whom a child should be first exposed is a matter to be considered. A woman will not be happy in life if, as a baby girl, she was first exposed to the mother. Her exposure should be to a man. The first impact on the mind of a girl should be of her father; then only will she be capable of loving a man fully. If men always surpass women it is because boys and girls are both first exposed to and brought up by the mother.

The exposure of the boy is correct, but that of the girl is not. So, as long as a baby girl's first exposure is not to her father, it will not be possible for her to become equal to a man. Neither through politics, nor through employment, nor through economic independence can she become equal, because from a psychological angle the weakness in the personality of a girl remains. No civilization so far has been able to overcome this weakness.

If a small balloon can exert so much influence on a chicken, if it can enter so indelibly into its mind, astrology suggests that whatsoever surrounds us -- the whole universe -- also enters into our consciousness at that moment of exposure at birth, when the mental film is exposed to the world. This determines forever your sympathies and antipathies for the entire life. All the constellations that are encircling the earth at that moment also, in a very deep way, imprint their influence on that newly born consciousness. The constellations are in certain positions: the basic significance of these

constellations lies in the influence of their radioactivity which falls upon the earth at the moment of birth.

Now scientists believe that every celestial body has its own unique radioactivity. The planet Venus throws out rays which are tranquil, whereas the moon has quite a different type of radio wave. The radio waves that reach us from Jupiter are different from those that reach us from the sun. The reason for the difference is that each planet has a different combination of gaseous layers encircling it, and from each planet a different combination of rays comes towards the earth. And when the child is born, whatever constellations, stars, planets or distant super-suns are encircling the horizon, all enter deep within the mind of the child at the time of its exposure. The cosmic situation at that moment -- with all its weaknesses, strengths and capabilities -- influences the child for his whole life.

It is like knowing the exact effect of what would happen when an atom bomb explodes amidst a populated area like Hiroshima. Before the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, it was only known that hundreds of thousands of people would die. But it was not known that this would also effect the future generations and everything else too. For those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki it was just a matter of one moment. But the trees that remained behind, the animals, the birds, the fish and the human beings that remained behind, were all permanently affected in an unknown manner. The total effect of this will be known only after about ten generations pass, because deep radioactive forces are still at work.

A woman who survived had all her ova affected by radioactivity. Now these ova are incapable of reproducing normal children such as they would have done before they were affected by the radioactivity. A child born of these ova could be lame or blind, it could have four or even eight eyes; it could be anything -- one cannot say. Its brain may be diseased or it may be a genius such as has never been before. We are not certain what it will be like; only one thing we know for certain is that it will not be like an ordinary normal being.

If the power of an atomic bomb -- which is comparatively not a very great power -- can cause such great harm to life on earth, then you can imagine the power of the sun. It is as if millions of atom bombs are bursting on it simultaneously. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki an atom bomb killed one hundred and twenty thousand human beings -- in comparison, can you imagine how much radioactivity exists on the sun?

The sun has been heating the earth for four billion years, and scientists say that there is no possibility of its beginning to grow cool for millions of years. Each day it gives out tremendous heat to the earth, and that too from a distance of almost one hundred million miles. Whatever happened in Hiroshima could have an effect only up to a radius of ten miles, whereas the sun has been giving us heat from a distance of one hundred million miles and for so long; still it is not exhausted. But compared with other suns in the universe our sun is just a tiny star. The stars that we see in the sky are much bigger than our sun, and each one of them has its own individual radiation which is flowing towards us.

One great scientist, Michael Gacquilin, has been carrying out research on the forces in the universe. He tells us that we are not able to understand even one percent of the things that are caused by the forces coming within our experience. Since we have begun to send space satellites beyond the earth, so much information has been transmitted to us that we have neither the words to describe it, nor are we able to develop the science to

decipher the transmitted information. We never imagined that so much energy and so many forces might be operating all around us.

In this context, let us understand one more thing. Astrology is not a new science that is still developing. The position is quite the reverse. If you have seen the Taj Mahal, you may have noticed some incomplete walls beyond the opposite bank of the River Yamuna. The current story is that Shahjehan not only made the Taj Mahal for his wife Mumtaj, but that he was also constructing a tomb for himself, from the same marble stone as the Taj Mahal, on the opposite bank of the River Yamuna. However, that tomb could not be completed, according to the story. But now some historians have done research, and they tell us that those walls which look incomplete are not the walls of some tomb that was being constructed, but are the remains of a big palace that existed long ago.

We have been told for the last three hundred years that those walls were the incomplete walls of a tomb that Shahjehan had begun to construct. But the walls of a tomb being newly built and the remains of some old palace would look similar, so it is very difficult to decide what exactly those walls are. Historical research now indicates that not only were they once a complete palace, but that the Taj Mahal itself was not constructed by Shahjehan. It was an old palace constructed by Hindus which Shahjehan converted into a tomb. But it often happens that we can't believe anything that contradicts what we have always heard.

No tomb like the Taj Mahal has been constructed anywhere else in this world. A tomb is never constructed like that. All around the Taj Mahal there are places for soldiers to stand, and for installing rifles and guns. Tombs are not needed to be protected by rifles and guns. It was an old palace that was converted. On the opposite bank of the Yamuna there was also an old palace which collapsed, and its ruins remain as a witness.

Astrology is also like the ruins of a great building that once existed. It was a complete science which is lost. It is neither new nor is it in the process of construction. From the walls that have remained it is not possible to judge how big that building once might have been. Many times truths are realized, only to become lost again.

About two hundred years before Christ, Aristarchus, a Greek scientist, discovered that the sun is the center of our universe and not the earth. This principle of Aristarchus became known as the heliocentric principle -- that the sun is in the center. But afterwards, about 100 A.D., Ptolemy again changed this discovery and said that the earth was the center. After that, it took over one thousand years until Kepler and Copernicus again established that the sun is the center of our universe. The truth discovered by Aristarchus remained hidden for a very long time, until Copernicus opened the old book of Aristarchus and declared it again -- and people were shocked.

Westerners say that America was discovered by Columbus. Oscar Wilde made a joke about it that has become well known when he went to America. He said that America had been discovered much earlier by someone else. This is true -- America was discovered many times and was lost again and again when relations with it were cut off. Someone asked Oscar Wilde, "If Columbus did not discover it the first time -- if it had already been discovered -- why did it become lost every time?"

Oscar Wilde jokingly replied, "He did discover America, it was discovered many times, but every time it was hushed up. Every time it was necessary to keep it quiet, because such a troublesome thing is best forgotten and put away!"

In the Mahabharata epic there are references to America -- one of Arjuna's wives was from Mexico. There are ancient Hindu temples in Mexico with idols of Ganesh chiseled on them.

It happens many times that the truth comes within our grip and then is lost again. Astrology was one such great truth: it was once known about, but was subsequently lost. There are difficulties in the way of knowing it again -- that is why I am talking to you from many different points of view.

My intention in talking on astrology could be misunderstood. It is not as if I intend to talk on the same subjects that are discussed by an ordinary astrologer. To such an astrologer you can pay a coin and be told your fortune. Perhaps you think that I am going to talk about him or be in support of him. In the name of astrology, ninety-nine percent of astrologers only bluff. Only one percent will not dogmatically assert that an event will definitely happen. They know that astrology is a vast subject -- so vast that someone can only hesitatingly enter into it.

When I am talking about astrology, I want show you to have a picture of the whole science from many angles so that you can enter it without any fear or hesitation. When I talk about astrology, I am not talking about the ordinary astrologer -- such small matters. But the average man's curiosity regarding astrology is just to know whether his daughter will get married or not....

Astrology can be divided into three parts. The first part is the core, the essence; it is the essentials, and cannot be changed. It is the part which is most difficult to understand. The second part is the middle layer, in which one can make whatever changes one wants. It is the semi-essential portion in which you can make changes if you know how, but without knowing, no changes are possible at all. The third part is the outermost layer which is nonessential, but about which we are all very curious.

The first is the essence, in which no changes can be made. When it is known, the only way is to cooperate with it. Religions have devised astrology in order to know and decipher this essential destiny. The semi-essential part of astrology is such that if we know about it we can change our lives -- otherwise not.

If we do not know, then whatsoever was going to happen will happen. If there is knowledge, there are alternatives to choose between. There is a possibility of transformation if the right choice is made. The third, nonessential part is just the periphery, the outer surface. There is nothing essential in it; everything is circumstantial.

But we go to consult astrologers only for the nonessential things. Someone goes and asks an astrologer when he will get employment -- there is no relationship between your employment and the moon and stars. Someone asks whether he will marry or not.... There can be a society without marriage. Someone asks whether he will remain poor or become rich.... There can be a socialist or communist society where there will be no rich and no poor people. So these are nonessential questions....

An eighty years old man was walking along when his foot slipped on some orange peel thrown onto the road. Now, is it possible to inquire of an astrologer and know from the moon and stars on which road and on which orange peel the foot will slip? Such queries are foolish, but you are curious to know in advance whether your foot will land on an orange skin and slip if you go out on the road today. This is nonessential. This has nothing to do with your being or your soul. These events happen on the periphery, and astrology has nothing to do with them. But because the astrologers were busy talking

only about such things, the great establishment of astrology collapsed. This was the only reason.

No intelligent person will be prepared to believe that when he was born it was written by destiny that on a particular day on Marine Drive his foot would land on some orange peel and he would fall.... Neither the falling down nor the orange peel have any relationship to the stars. Astrology has lost respect because it became connected with such things. At one time or the other we all have wanted to know such things from astrologers -- but these things are nonessential. But there are certain semi-essential matters such as the birth or death of a person: if you can know everything about these, you can take precautionary measures. If you do not know anything, you can't do anything.

If our knowledge about the diagnosis of disease is increased, we will be able to increase the life-span of human beings. We have been doing it. If our research to make deadlier atom bombs succeeds, we will be able to kill hundreds of thousands of people at a time -- we have done it. This semi-essential world presents a possibility for our being able to do certain things, if we know in advance what is going to happen. If we do not know, nothing can be done. By our knowing in advance, alternatives can be sorted out and selected.

Beyond this, the world of the essential exists -- you cannot do anything about it. However, our curiosity is to know only about nonessential things. Seldom does someone reach out to know the semi-essential. Our curiosity or desire never extends to knowing that which is essential and unavoidable, that which cannot be changed even if known.

Mahavira was passing through a village with his disciple, Goshalak, who later became his opponent, when they came across a small plant. Goshalak said to Mahavira, "Listen, here is a plant. What do you think: Will it grow enough to produce a flower, or will it die before it can flower? What is its future?"

Mahavira immediately closed his eyes and sat in front of the plant.

Goshalak cunningly said, "Do not evade the issue. What will happen by closing your eyes?" He did not know why Mahavira had become silent and closed his eyes, and that he was looking for the essential. It was necessary to go deep down into the being, into the soul of that plant. Without doing so, it was not possible to say what would happen.

After a while, Mahavira opened his eyes and said, "This plant will survive to flower."

Goshalak immediately pulled the plant up by its roots, threw it away and laughed derisively. There was no better way to falsify the statement of Mahavira?

Mahavira had nothing more to say now, because Goshalak had uprooted the plant and thrown it away as a challenge. He was laughing, Mahavira was smiling, and they continued their journey. It began to rain heavily. There was a storm and for seven days continuously torrential rains fell, so they were not able to go out for seven whole days.

When the rains had subsided and they were returning, on the way they reached the same spot where seven days previously Mahavira had closed his eyes to know the inner being of the plant. They saw that the plant was again standing with its roots well below the ground. Due to the heavy rains and winds the earth had become wet and loose, and the roots of the plant had dug in.

Mahavira again closed his eyes and stood by the plant. Goshalak became very embarrassed -- he had uprooted and thrown away that plant. When Mahavira opened his

eyes, Goshalak said, "I am surprised and confused. I uprooted this plant and threw it away, and it is growing again."

Mahavira replied, "It will survive to flower. I closed my eyes to see the inner potentiality and condition of the seed -- whether it was capable of taking root again even though it was uprooted, whether it was suicidal or not, whether it had a strong instinct or desire for death. If its instinct was suicidal it would have used your help to die. I wanted to see whether it was yearning to live -- if it was determined to live, it would live. I knew that you were going to uproot it and throw it away."

Goshalak asked, "What are you saying?"

Mahavira said, "When I was looking into the inner being of the plant with my eyes closed, I also saw you standing by, determined to uproot it. I knew that you would uproot the plant -- that is why it was necessary for me to know the inner capacity of the plant to live, how much self-confidence and will power it had. If it was waiting to die and looking for an excuse, your excuse would be enough for it to die; otherwise, the uprooted plant would take root again."

Goshalak lacked the courage to uproot the plant again; he was afraid. Previously Goshalak had gone laughing to the village; this time, Mahavira marched ahead with a knowing smile.

Goshalak then asked, "Why are you laughing?"

Mahavira said, "I was watching, just thinking about your capability -- whether you could uproot the plant a second time or not."

Goshalak said, "You could see whether I would do it or not?"

Mahavira replied, "It was nonessential. You might have uprooted it, you might not have uprooted it. But it was essential and unavoidable that the plant still wanted to live. Its whole being, its whole vitality, wanted to live. That was essential. What was nonessential was your throwing it away or not, and that was dependent on you. But you have proven weaker and less determined than the plant. You are defeated."

One of the reasons for Goshalak being displeased with Mahavira was this incident concerning the plant.

The astrology I am talking about concerns the essential, the fundamental. At best your curiosity as far as the semi-essential. You want to know how long you will live or whether or not you will suddenly die. But you are not curious to know what you will do if you live -- how you will live. You do want to know how you will die when the time comes or what you will be doing at that time. Your curiosity extends to events, not to the soul. That I am living is just an event, but what I am doing while living, or what I am, is my soul. When I die it will be an event, but at the moment of death, how I will be, what I will do, is my soul. We shall all die, the event of death is similar for all, but the manner of dying, the moment of death, will be different for everyone -- someone can even die smiling.

At the time of death, someone asked Mulla Nasruddin, "What do you think, Mulla? -- when people are born from where do they come?

Mulla replied, "I've seen every child weeping at the time of birth, and at the time of death also everyone seems to be weeping. So, I surmise that people are neither coming from nor going to a good place. While they come they are weeping, while they go they are also weeping!"

But people like Nasruddin die laughing.... Death is an event, but that which is laughing at the time of death is the soul. So, when you go to an astrologer, ask him how you will die -- weeping or laughing? This is worthwhile asking -- but it is connected to essential astrology. No one on this earth has asked an astrologer whether he will die weeping or smiling. You are asking when you will die -- as if dying is of value in itself. You are asking how long you will live -- as if just living is sufficient.

Why will I live? For what shall I live? What shall I do while living? What shall I become if I live? Such questions are not asked by anyone. That is why the structure of astrology has collapsed. Anything which is constructed on nonessential foundations will certainly collapse. The astrology I am talking about, and what you understand to be astrology, are different. The astrology about which I am talking is qualitatively different and of much more depth. Its dimensions are different. I am discussing that which is essential in your life -- in total harmony. It is not separate, the whole world participates in it -- you are not alone in it.

When Buddha became enlightened, he placed his hands together in salutation and bowed his head until it touched the ground. The story goes on to say that the gods came from heaven to pay their respects to Buddha because he had found the ultimate truth, but upon seeing him with his head touching the ground, they were surprised. They asked Buddha to whom he was bowing. They said that they had come from heaven to offer greetings to him because he was enlightened and that they did not know that there could be something to which even Buddha had to offer salutations, as enlightenment is the ultimate attainment.

Buddha then opened his eyes and said, "In whatsoever has happened to me, I am not alone, the world has also participated. So I bowed down to the earth in thanksgiving to the whole world."

This is a matter connected with essential astrology. That is why Buddha told his disciples that whenever they attained the inner bliss they should immediately give thanks to the whole world, because they were not alone in that experience. If the sun had not risen or if the moon had not risen, or if the chain of events had differed just slightly, the experience that they had would have been missed. It is true it was they who had had the experience, but everything was instrumental in it -- the whole existence contributed to it. The name of this interconnected cosmic relationship is astrology.

Buddha would never say, "I have become enlightened"; he would only say, "The world has experienced through me -- this event of enlightenment, this supreme light, is known to the world through me. I am only an excuse, a pretext. I am only a crossing where all roads of the world have met."

Have you ever thought that though a crossroads looks significant, by itself it is nothing? If the four roads that meet are removed, the significance of the crossroads will also disappear. We are each a crossroads where the forces of the world touch and meet at a point. At that point an individual is formed, a person is born.

The meaning and essence of astrology is that we are not separate, we are one with the universe. Not only are we one with the universe, we are also participants in every situation and event.

So Buddha replied that he was offering greetings to all the buddhas who had come before him, and even to those who would come after him. Then someone said to him that it was understandable that he offer greetings to those born before him, because knowingly

or unknowingly Buddha might be in their debt -- their knowledge might have helped him -- but why should he salute those who were not yet born? What could he have gained from them?

Buddha replied that he had received help not only from those buddhas who were born before him, but also from those who would be born after him -- because from where he stood at that moment, the past and the future had met and become one. Those who had passed were meeting those that were coming right to where he was. The sunrise and the sunset were meeting at one point. So Buddha was also offering greetings to those who were still to be born. He was indebted to them also -- because if they had not been projected into the future, Buddha could not have occurred.

This is a little difficult to understand. This is connected with the essential astrology. I will not be if anything from my past is dropped or lost -- I am a link in a long chain. It is understandable that if my father were not born I could not be born, because my father is an essential link in the chain reaching up to me. Even if my grandfather were not there I could not be born, because the link is essential. But it is difficult to understand that if there were no link attached to me leading into the future, then also I could not be born.

What have I to do with that future link? -- I am already born. But Buddha says that if whatsoever is going to happen in the future were not already there, then I could not be born because I am a link between the past and the future. If there were even a slight change in the past or the future, I could not be the same as I am now. Yesterday has made me and tomorrow has also made me: this is astrology. Not only yesterday, but also tomorrow; not only what has already arrived, but also what is coming; not only the sun that has risen today, but also the sun that will rise tomorrow -- all are participants.

The projections of the future also determine the present moments. This present moment could not be if there were no future moments. Only with the support of future moments can the present moment occur. Our hands are resting on the shoulders of the future, our feet are on the shoulders of our past. It is very obvious that if that which is below me -- on which I am standing and which I can see -- slips away, I will fall. But if the shoulders of the future -- on which my outstretched hands are resting -- slip away then I will also fall.

When a person finds himself connected with this inner unity of past and future he will be able to understand astrology. Then astrology becomes a religion, then astrology becomes spiritual. Otherwise, by becoming related with the nonessential astrology becomes merely a subject for pseudo fortune-tellers on the roadside, and then it is of no value. Even the highest science is just dust in the hands of those who are ignorant. Its value is determined by the use to which we are able to put the knowledge.

Hence I am trying to push you from many doors so you might understand that everything is joined together, interconnected. This universe is like a family, like one organic body. When I am breathing, my whole body is affected; likewise, when the sun breathes, the earth is affected. The earth is even affected by what remote suns do. Even the smallest cell vibrates in unity with those giant suns. If you can understand this, we shall be able to enter into essential astrology, and then we shall be spared the uselessness of the nonessential.

We have associated the most trivial matters with astrology. Those matters have no value, and because of our connecting them with astrology, difficulties have arisen. For example, we have connected the matter of a person being born into a poor family or a

rich family with astrology. If you do not understand that such things are nonessential, astrology will remain connected with them. Astrology can become a tool in your hands only if you distinguish the essential from the nonessential.

I will tell you a very interesting story so that you may understand.... Mohammed had a disciple named Ali. Ali once asked Mohammed's opinion about whether a man is independent and free to do what he wants, or whether he is bound by his destiny in everything he does. Ali asked, "Can one do as one wants or not?" -- and man has been asking this question for a long, long time. "If a man is not able to do as he desires," Ali said, "then it is useless and foolish to preach to him not to steal, not to tell lies, not to be dishonest. Or is it destiny that one man should always be there to preach to others not to steal or not to do this or that, knowing full well that it is also destiny for a dishonest man to remain dishonest, for a thief to remain a thief, for a murderer to remain a murderer? All this appears absurd. If everything is predestined, all education is useless -- all prophets, all saints and all teachers are useless."

People have asked such questions to Mahavira and to Buddha also. If what is going to happen is predestined, why should Mahavira or Buddha take so much trouble to explain what is right and what is wrong? So, Ali asked Mohammed what he thought about this controversial matter. If such a question was asked to Mahavira or Buddha, they would have given a very complicated and deep reply, but Mohammed gave a reply which Ali could understand. Many of Mohammed's replies were direct and straightforward. Ordinarily, answers given by people who are uneducated or less educated, or who are simple villagers, are direct and frank. People like Kabir, Nanak, Mohammed and Jesus were simple in that way. Answers by people like Buddha, Mahavira and Krishna were complex -- Buddha and Mahavira were the cream of a rich and highly developed civilization. The words of Jesus were direct, like a blow on the head. Kabir has actually sung: "Kabir is standing in the open market with a hammer in his hand to hit you!" If anyone came near him he would, so to speak, break open his head to remove all the rubbish that was lying inside.

Mohammed did not give any metaphysical reply. He asked Ali to lift one leg and stand on it. Ali had asked a question about whether a man is free to do what he wants. Why should Ali stand on one leg? Mohammed said, "First lift one leg."

Poor Ali lifted his left leg and stood there on one leg.

Mohammed then asked him, "Now lift the right leg also."

Ali was puzzled and asked how it was possible. Then Mohammed said, "If you had wanted to, you could have lifted the right leg first, but now you cannot.... A man is always free to lift the first leg -- it can be whichever he wants -- but no sooner has the first been lifted when the other becomes bound to the earth."

With regard to the nonessential part of life, we are always free to lift the first leg. But once that is done it becomes a bondage for the essential part. We take steps that are nonessential, become entangled, and then we are not able to do the essential. So Mohammed said to Ali that he had all the freedom to lift the right or the left leg first. But once he exercised that freedom and lifted one left leg, he was incapable of lifting the other leg. So freedom is there within certain limits, but beyond those limits there is bondage.

This is an old conflict for the human mind. If man is a slave of his destiny -- as the astrologers seem to assert -- if everything is predestined and happens inevitably, then all

the religions are of no use. If a man is free to do everything, as all so-called rationalists say, and if nothing is predetermined or inevitable, then life will become just a chaos and an anarchy. Then it is also possible that a man may steal and still attain liberation, that he may murder people and still realize the divine. When nothing is related, when one step is not related to the other, then there are no laws and nothing is binding anywhere.

I remember a story about Mulla Nasruddin.... Mulla was passing by a mosque, when suddenly someone fell down from the minaret of the mosque where he had climbed to say his prayers. The man fell right onto the shoulders of Mulla, and Mulla's spine was broken. So Mulla was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Some of his disciples came to see him, because Mulla used to interpret all events. They asked him, "How do you interpret this event? What does it mean?"

Mulla replied, "It is very clear that there is no relationship between an act and its fruit. One person falls down, and the spine of someone else breaks. And so from now onwards you should not enter into the controversy of the doctrine of karma. It has been proved that one person may fall down and that the spine of another can break. That person who fell down was hale and hearty: he fell on me and I got in a mess. I had not climbed the minaret to say prayers, I was just returning home. I was not in any way concerned with the prayers -- but still I got involved. So, from now onwards no more talk about the doctrine of karma. Anything can happen. There is no law; it is all anarchy."

Mulla was very unhappy, naturally, because his spine had been broken unnecessarily.

There are two hypotheses. On the one hand there is the astrologer who is sitting on the side of the road being asked about the nonessential.... Whether he is the astrologer of a poor man or of Morarji Desai it does not make any difference -- all ordinary astrologers are asked about nonessentials. An ordinary astrologer is asked questions like: "Shall we win the elections or not?" How are the elections connected with the moon and the stars? The ordinary astrologer who replies, "Everything is predetermined, and no changes, not even as much as one inch, can be made," is making a false statement.

On the other hand there is the rationalist. He says that nothing is connected inevitably: whatsoever happens is coincidental, circumstantial and a matter of chance. There is no law, everything is anarchic. He is also making a false statement.

There is a law: A rationalist is never found so full of joy and bliss as a buddha.

The rationalist denies God, soul and religion with the help of logic, but he can never attain the joy of Mahavira. It is definite that Mahavira must have done something that earned him his joy, Buddha must have done something that liberated him, and Krishna must also have done something which made it possible for him to give out such distinctly unique magical notes through his flute.

The real thing is the third, which is the quintessence of everything, which belongs to the innermost and which is absolutely predetermined. The more one moves toward one's center, the nearer one comes to the essential, predetermined part. As we move towards the periphery, we move towards coincidence. The more we talk about external happenings, the more there is coincidence. When we talk about inner phenomena, things begin to appear scientific, as if based on a certain law, and they become more and more decisive.

Between these two conditions -- the essential and the peripheral -- there is ample room for changes through the exercise of choice. Here, a person of knowledge makes the correct choice, while a person who is without knowledge, who is in the darkness of ignorance, drifts to his destiny. In darkness, circumstance catches hold of him.

So there are three areas of life. In one area, that which is the essential core, everything is predetermined. Knowing this is knowing the essence of astrology. In another area, that which is peripheral, everything is uncertain. To know this is to know the everyday unpredictable world. There is another area which is in the middle. By knowing this, a person can save himself from trying to do the impossible, and can do what is possible. If a person lives in the peripheral and middle areas in such a way that he begins to move towards the center, he will become religious. But if he lives in such a way that he is never able to move towards the center, his life will remain irreligious.

For example, a person is preparing to steal. Stealing is not predetermined; it can't be claimed that stealing is inevitable or unavoidable, there is complete freedom whether to steal or not. But once stealing has been committed, it is as if one foot has been lifted and the other foot remains on the earth: after doing it, you cannot undo the act. And the total effect of the act of stealing will spread over the personality of the person who did it. But as long as stealing is not done, the other alternative is present and available.

The mind of a person swings between yes and no. If he says yes, he will be thrown towards the periphery; if he says no, he will move towards the center. Thus, in the middle, there is a choice. If he makes a wrong choice he is thrown towards the periphery; if he makes a right choice he moves towards the center, towards that part of astrology which is essential in life.

I have told you certain things. I have told you that we are the outstretched hands of the sun, that the earth is born of the sun and we are born of the earth. We are not separate, we are all united. We are branches and leaves that have spread out from the sun. Whatsoever happens in the roots of the sun will vibrate and spread throughout and within one's being, through every cell and nerve. If we can understand this properly then in this world we will realize that we are one family. Then we have no need to live encased within ego and pride.

The heaviest blow of astrology is upon the ego. If astrology is right, the ego is wrong. Let us understand it this way: if astrology is wrong, then nothing else remains -- but the ego -- that can be right. If astrology is right then the world is right, and only I can be wrong. I am only an infinitesimal and negligible part of the world -- I cannot even be included in the count, I am so minute. If astrology is right, then I am not there. There is a big flow of forces in which I am only a small ripple.

Sometimes, as we ride on a big wave, we have the impression that we too are something special and that big wave is forgotten. That big wave too is riding upon some sea, but even that sea is forgotten. If that sea gives way underneath, the wave will disappear and we will also disappear. We unnecessarily become unhappy over the possibility of our disappearance because we became artificially happy through our belief in our own existence. We should have realized that there is only a large wave and a vast sea, and that we are not -- that it is the wish of the sea that we arise in it, that it is the wish of the sea that we die.

If an attitude arises in which we realize that we are only a fraction of the grand desire of the infinite, then there will be no unhappiness. And with such an attitude, the so-called

happiness which we want to enjoy will also not be present. The feeling of happiness over such thoughts as, "I have won, I have earned," will no longer remain. Nor will there be a feeling of unhappiness over such thoughts as, "I am dying, I am finished, I have drowned; I have been destroyed or defeated." When both happiness and unhappiness no longer remain, we enter into the world of reality -- the essential -- where there is bliss. Astrology then becomes the door to bliss.

If we look at astrology as a melting of our pride or as a disintegration of the ego, then astrology becomes religion.

But we go to the ordinary astrologer, and in order to protect our egos we ask, "Will I run into loss? Will I win the lottery? In this new business I am undertaking, will I succeed?" These questions are asked in order to save our egos, but the fact is that astrology is entirely in opposition to the ego. The significance of astrology is this -- that you are not but the universe is, that you are not but the cosmos is. Very powerful forces are operating, and you are absolutely insignificant.

You can see astrology in this light only if you think and feel that you are just a very small part of this big world. That is why I have told you how the whole solar family is united with the sun. If you can realize this, then you will also realize that our sun is united with many larger suns in the universe.

Scientists say that there are forty million suns, and all are born from some bigger sun. We have no knowledge of where that supreme sun may be. We do not know how this earth is rotating round its axis and also revolving around the sun, nor do we know where that center is, around which our sun with its family is revolving. A great universal merry-go-round is in swing.

In Hindu temples there is the practice of pradakshina, circling around the image of the deity. This pradakshina is the symbol of the fact that everything is rotating by itself and also revolving around something else. Then these two together revolve around a third thing, then these three together revolve around a fourth thing, and so on, ad infinitum.

The ultimate center of infinity is referred to by those who know as "the supreme center of Brahma." This ultimate is neither rotating, nor revolving around anything else. Whatsoever is itself rotating will definitely revolve around something else, but that which neither rotates nor revolves is the ultimate. It is also known as the supreme silence or void. This is the axis, the pivot around which the whole universe expands and contracts.

Hindus thought that just as a bud becomes a flower and the flower withers, similarly the world also expands and then disintegrates..that just as there is a day and a night, there is a day of the world and there is a night of the world also. As I told you earlier, there are cycles of eleven years and cycles of ninety years. Similarly, Hindus thought that there are cycles of millions of years: during such a cycle a universe is born, passes through youth and grows old; earths are born, moons and stars spread across the universe, populations grow, and millions of living creatures are born.

This is not only happening on the earth, now scientists say that there must be a minimum of fifty thousand planets on which there is life. There may be more, but this is the minimum. In such an infinite universe it is not possible that only one earth can have life. There are fifty thousand planets or earths on which there is life -- it is an infinite expanse. Then everything contracts again.

This earth was not here from the beginning, nor will it last until the end. Just as I am born and I will be no more, so will this earth and sun be no more -- and a time will come

when these moons, stars and planets will also be no more. The circle of their being and not being continues. We are just infinitesimal, rotating and revolving somewhere on this cosmic wheel. And if we still think that we are separate, then we are like Mulla Nasruddin who was traveling in an airplane for the first time....

Mulla Nasruddin entered the airplane, and as it took off he started walking along the aisle in the plane. He wanted to reach his destination very fast and was in a great hurry; naturally, if you want to reach somewhere quickly you will reach sooner if you walk faster...! His co-passengers stopped him and asked him what he was doing. Mulla Nasruddin replied that he was in a hurry.

He was traveling in a plane for the first time and he was using the same logic which worked on the ground. There, he always reached earlier when he walked faster. He could not realize that walking in the plane was useless -- the airplane itself was flying and he would only exhaust himself by walking. He would not arrive any earlier, and it is possible that by the time he arrived he would be so exhausted that he would not be able to stand up. He should rest, he should close his eyes and rest. But neither Mulla nor other pundits would agree to such advice.

He who achieves rest within this cosmic circular movement of the world, I call religious. He is religious who knows that universal forces are at work and there is no hurry -- that his hurry is of no use. If we can only be one with the universal harmony, it is enough -- and it is blissful.

I have told you some things about astrology -- and if you realize these things, then astrology can become a door to spiritual attainment.